

# The Collective Sorrow

Shauna Solaman

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1.  
**Phoenix's Arrival**

At the corner of her eyes, she looked up at the ceiling. She has been tossing and turning since she first lay down on her bed since ten. In her mind, A Clockwork Orange, and different thoughts that could stem from that continued to plague her. On her side, she turned over to look at the clock. Twelve zero three. "Un- fucking believable," she muttered to herself. At this rate, she would not get any rest tonight.

Across from her bed stood a man in the shadows. She had no idea he was there, and he wasn't sure if she was the one. Nonetheless, how would they meet if they never crossed?

Out of the shadows a black like substance reached out for her. Wrapping itself round her, mouth first to ensure no screaming, the silk like material dragged her to the mirror -- and right through. Beyond the mirror it dropped her. She looked around, it was her room, but yet not her room. Everything was reversed. She looked around; startled to find a dark figure stood near her and began making its way closer. "You are the right one," she heard the figure say in a male voice. Completely puzzled, she fumbled to her feet, and started to back away. "Right one for what?" she questioned the figure. "Wait, first who are you, where am I, and if this a dream, I want a pink unicorn." The figure that was wearing a black hooded cape moved quietly and quickly. Whoever or whatever it was, the hood was concealing their face. "I am probably just a figment of your imagination if you think this is a dream. Clever one too. I suppose you know about lucid dreaming. So then, I should question you about why I am here," he responded cockily to her. She looked at him thoughtfully and proceeded to say, "Confusing bit you are. I am Shauna. And I should like to see your face if I am to figure this out." He stirred for a bit, then removed his hood. A mess of black hair came tumbling down. His complexion, as far as she could tell, was just a bit lighter than that of her own. Dark eyes, dark brown. "So now that we've established nothing whatsoever, except that you think that you are Shauna, let's continue." "What do you mean, think that I am Shauna? Who are you?" she charged. Grinning, the young man (as it so seems), responded very carefully, "I am Dragon. I've a humanistic name. But I prefer not to use it, since being here. Shauna, see, that's your human name. But here, it's different." "Are you implying that I'm not human?" Standing in the darken room, he couldn't figure out what would quiet her thinking mind so they could hurry. "You are human," said Dragon to her, but he wanted to be cautious of his words, "however you are also a special one. I know that you've always felt abnormal out there in that world. Here you are normal. But right now, we have to hurry, so that you can make your choice." Puzzled, she responded quickly, "Choice--" but was cut off as he tugged at her.

Side by side they walked down the stairs. Sunlight was pouring in from all the windows. However, all the mirrors that she could see were smashed. They walked out through the front door, which wasn't that far away from her room. He looked at her, "I know you're the right one. This is the first time I've seen the sun since being here." She glanced around, it seemed like her block, but reversed. "The sun isn't here often? Is everything like this?" He looked around and

tried to remember what it was like seeing all of this for the first time. Before he could respond, she has already noticed a major difference, beyond a certain point, there was just water. Which is unusual for the middle of Queens, New York. "What's...I'm confused," she said to Dragon. He smiled to her, and walked towards the edge. "You're in a different place. See, you're different. Well, you're different in the world that you're from. Sort of like dimensions -- not physical planes..." he checked to see if she was following. "Yes, dimensions, I guess as in layers or something," she responded to his looks. "Correct. Well, close enough. Anyhow, because of the high volumes of people, you kind of share things, further pushing you into abnormality over there. Well, here, you're normal." They boarded the boat and started to set sail. It was a rather big boat, something she had seen in pirate movies of the sort. Mahogany. Her favourite type of wood. She looked back at the small island of 126th Street.

"How do you know I belong here? What is this, some kind of Wonderland thing?" He grinned, and he did have quite a large grin. A sort of Cheshire cat like quality. He looked up, "The sun." She didn't understand that nor did she think she would understand most of the things that would transpire. "You know I don't understand," she said to Dragon. "Yeah Shauna, I know," he said in a sort of mockingly tone. She glared at him and asked, "What was your other name." Looking over the sides into the water, he muttered the name Chris. "Oh, funny how you would call upon Wonderland," he said suddenly. "My aren't we a bit slow in the processing field. Though I'm the same. Why wouldn't I see links to Wonderland." He just kept looking over. "Whatever makes you happy. I guess I should help you understand the rush. You see, time doesn't stand still, for anyone. So I kind of have to show you this world, so you can make the decision. Which is, if you want to stay here, or go back to the other world. So, since time doesn't stand still, you're missing from that world. I need to have you back before anyone notices." "I don't understand my importance." He straightened himself and the drapery of the cape shifted. "The sun. You'll understand that eventually. But you're capable of oh so much. We just don't know what else." She walked over to the other side and glanced over the side. Purple water. Go figure.

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2.  
**The Taking of Phoenix**  
or  
**Phoenix's Arrival (cont.)**

Purple waters stretched from one end of the where the eyes could see and met back there. Unusual, since it goes against everything that has been explained, what with colour wavelengths. Leaning against the edge of the mahogany ship, she looked over at Chris who was at the other side. "I'm still very confused, for nothing, to my recollection, has been explained." Standing many feet apart, screaming at one another through the wind, indeed there had been many questions that needed to be answered but hadn't been posed. Such as, where was this place? Why did it exist? Why were there only a few there? Why were they here? If they were selected, or needed, what was the purpose? Who was steering the ship? So many questions.

Casually Chris walked over to her. She looked deep in thought; after all, what could make a person look as withdrawn as she did. "I'll try to answer the questions that I have answers to. Now that we're on the way, it's not like you would be stalling," he said to her. "Firstly, why do you go by Dragon, and not Chris. You didn't fully answer that..." she paused. "No, wait, why am I here? Why are you here? What are we doing? Where are we going? What is this place? And so on. You get the point." He looked her over carefully, and took her hand and led her up a small flight of stairs, into a small room that could be found up there. Inside the room, it was dark, except for the small lights that seem to be dancing around. Stars, she thought to herself. There was a round table, oh not that big, but not that small. Rather fitting for a room this size. Different colour drapery laced the room, burgundy, purple, and greens, to reds. Underneath the table were chairs without backs. Chris, who still sported his long black cape reached under and pulled out two. He had long black hair, I'm sure I may have mentioned this. She moved cautiously near him, after all, she had every reason to still be cautious. She on the other hand had medium dark brown hair, that which could only really be seen in sunlight. This dark brown hair was now a shade of gray as she sat down on the back-less chair. She crossed her legs beneath her, in order to properly sustain herself on the chair. He removed his cape, to reveal that he was wearing a black t-shirt and a pair of blue jeans. How odd, she thought. In addition to that, he was adorned with a spiked collar and bracelet to match. She kind of saw his eyes and saw that they too were dark brown, like hers. He pulled one of the odd chairs beneath him next to her and sat down.

His lips began to move before any sound was emitted. "Many questions. You inquisitive thing you. Well, let's see, you know that I am named Chris, but I call myself Dragon. I cannot offer you a name for this dimension. Because as far as I know, you understood that though we are still on Earth, we're in some other dimension." She moved to question this, "How do you know we're on Earth." Grinning, he quickly responded, "For arguments sake, let's put that aside and naturally assume that this is Earth. Let's not question that. Where we are, I don't know what to call this place." "Maybe it's a space in time, some other time." He glared at her. "Moving along, we don't know. I call it Islandia, but that's just me. Anyone you meet here will have their own name for this place. The continents are a bit different, as I'm sure you can tell." She perked up, "About the broken mirrors...?" He looked slightly annoyed. "Quiet. Look I know you have questions, remember, I am still in the same position you are. I just have a little bit more knowledge, which I'm trying to pass on to you. Alright, well, we figure that it's something within our own being that brings us here. I didn't bring you here. No one did. You brought yourself here. In places where people are different, there's often a mirror. Which at first we thought was a passageway here. Well, we still think of it as a passage, since if that's where we want to go back home, that's normally where we try. But the point is, as you get older, your link to this world disappears. Wait, no it, begins closing. The more you deny your fantasy, the more you deny your powers, your being. That's why it closes. You are the only being that can bring yourself here." Looking at him, she moved a bit forward to him, "Sort of like instead of becoming part of society, you escape. So why didn't I bring myself here before, why now." "Simply because you had already begun to lose yourself in the daily nothingness. So your connection began to close. I heard your screams, so I went to investigate. I was surprised to see the island of 126th Street, but I still checked all the houses. And this will answer your question; most mirrors are already broken when they appear to us. Rarely is one still intact, though for some reason, if the connection is reestablished, it will reestablish itself. So when I saw your mirror intact, I knew something within you was stirring. You just needed a boost. So I informed some people, and they sent me to

get you." With a raised eyebrow, she asked, "People? Who? And why you?" He leaned back a little bit, flashing a smile, "Because I am a night person. I get people at night. People, as in, you didn't meet them, yet." "Well, I want to know more about you." "And you won't, not for right now, Ms. Shauna. However, you have certain capabilities that are necessary. So do I. We don't know all of yours, except that is for the sun. And don't query me about the sun again. You'll figure it out. However, I call myself Dragon, or to some The Dragon, simply because it's my form. We're almost there." Chris stood up and grabbed his cape. He offered his hand to her, but she waved it away. "So this is the place without a name. What do you do here anyway?" "Hmm, yes no name. I don't know what we do." With that, he threw on his cape and the hood, and let her out the door. Together they walked down the stairs, off the ship, and stepped onto the land with no name.

The land with no name was a colourful place. Lovely blues, greens, purples and much more, in different hues. "Utopia. They aren't very good, they are destined to fall," she mused. "A bit on the negative side, aren't you? Well, you're right. And this is no Utopia." They walked over the patches of green and purple grass. They weren't sharply different in colour, rather muted, and blended. "Different colours." Now that Chris or Dragon had his hood on, she couldn't see his face. So she watched the motion of the fabric instead. Turning to her, the cape spoke to her. "Different? Or normal? How do you know that everything you know isn't in fact different from the way everything is." As they walked over the grass, they reached a small path. Looking up ahead, she saw that the path branched out and formed the shape of the double helix. "This path leads into the village. If you can call it that," he said as he motioned her along. It wasn't a long walk to reach the village, which was a bunch of normal (to you, not to them) looking houses. As they walked in, a young boy ran up to greet them.

"Ah ha. You must be the Phoenix," said the boy.

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### 3. Convening with the King

The young boy, he could probably be between nine and ten, was of light skin colour, small round eyes, a small nose and a small mouth. All equally proportioned to his body. The only thing that was strikingly odd was his green hair. Shauna could almost feel Chris grinning beneath the hood of the cape. "'Ello there Strife," came a muffled voice from under the cape. "Ahh, Tear, the sun, now my days here can be longer. I guess you finally got the right one," replied Strife. Strife turned around and started running off into the fields that were behind them. Shauna swung around, only to see the little boy vanish. "Where did he go...", she paused and in a questioning way added, "Tear?" He removed his hood, the light hit his eyes, and there Shauna could see hints of purple dancing around in his eyes. He had an overall smooth appearance, sort of like a child. "I go by many names. There aren't too many people here, so it's pretty easy to give yourself a different name any time you want. Sort of like moods." "And Strife?" "Strife is a child. Most children pass in and out of here without much problems. They need not a passageway, they're here, and then they're not. You'll find that with most kids you meet here. They are really the only

ones that keep one name." He started moving along the pathway through the village. "Looks like a normal block here," she said in an observatory manner. "Well, it is. Things are constantly changing. The only thing that was ever really stable was the darkness. No sun. No light. This is now different as you can see." The light seemed to hitting everything, moving over every crevice, as if to make up for lost time. "What are we to do next?" He looked up, and in the distance was a dark loamy building, somewhat of a castle. "We are to meet the King and Queen." "Of course, there should be a King and Queen, who rule this place of no name. And they would have a castle." Chuckling, they both walked along the path to the dark dreary looking castle. The light had not made its way there yet. "Where is everyone?" "Hiding."

As they got closer to their destination, the place seemed to continuously lighten up. It was looking less dreary. The ever name changing figure beside her pulled a pocket watch out of the inside of his cape. We've just under four hours before you are to be returned. Watching the ground that passed beneath them, she replied, "Yes, I like being spoken of like a package," without looking up. "Well, as aforementioned, you may choose to go back home. And if you do, you need to be there before your parents awaken." "So, why do I need to meet these people anyway?" Her medium cut dark brown, which was very apparent now, tumbled around her. Chris looked at her carefully, and realized she was actually squinting. "The sun can't be that bright." She looked up at him, "I don't have perfect vision; I wear glasses. You didn't exactly give me time or space to grab my glasses when snatching me out of bed." He looked at her in a serious manner, and then softly chuckled. "I didn't do that. You did. In any case, you need to meet them." They reached the doors, which of amazing lengths stood tall. The doors were made of a brownish gray type of wood. "What am I supposed to call you?" she asked him as she looked up at the door that they stood before. "Whatever suites you at the time." With that, he pushed open the door, and led her in.

The room they walked into flooded with light from the inside. Chris pushed the door closed behind them. The room went back into a state of darkness. Though it wasn't completely dark, there were fire torches along the gray walls. Chris removed his cape and hung it on the wall. There were three archways -- spaces for doors without the doors, and all of which were darkened. He moved to the right and so she followed. As they walked down this darkened hall, there was nothing except for the stones that made it. Though there was a bit of light at the end. She could see light creeping out the bottom of a door. Chris walked through the door to Shauna's amazement. She reached for the handle, but at the moment, the door opened, with Chris there. He brought her inside the bright room, which was huge. She tried to figure out where all the light was coming from, but simply couldn't. Books aligned all the walls, and in the center there was a desk, with three recliners. There they formed a circle. "This is the room of the Tempest. She isn't here, but here is where you'll meet with someone," Chris said to her, leading her to a seat. Crushed black velvet. As she sat in one, he sat in another next to her. She looked around, "Oh so many books. Who is this Tempest?" "An avid reader, as you'll come to find. You may know her, but she isn't to be concerned with right now. She is elsewhere." She looked at the rosewood desk, which was closest to her seat; there was a bottle of silver ink set next to a blue orchid. A calligrapher, she thought to herself. Slowly, she started to pick of the sounds of rustling. "Be calm," he said to her. Then out of nowhere it would seem, that someone appeared. This person, wearing all white, sort of glided towards them from one corner of the room. Shauna couldn't tell whether this figure had a mask on or not. All over white, even his face was white, with small

black and red markings. She settled on the fact that he was wearing a mask. "I am the King," the figure said.

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#### 4.

#### **Persuading the Phoenix**

The figure that introduced himself as the King, took a seat, the furthest from Shauna's chair. Gracefully, he sat down, crossed his legs and rested his arms on the armrest. He was utterly graceful, moving like liquid. A porcelain face, she thought to herself. Chris, who seemed to have understood her thoughts, smiled at her. "Astennu, you've served us well," said the King to Chris. Chris looked over at Shauna, "It merely means moon, that's all." "Shauna, somehow, I don't think that name suits you. But it is whatever you want to be called. King, is unflattering. It makes me feel superior and I am not. Call me Aricin, if you ever need to address me," Aricin said to her. "Does your name change as well?" "Yes, everyone has a different name to call me, that is if I've given them one. It's rare I do so." She inched forward a bit, "So, why am I here?" A black grin formed on Aricin's white porcelain mask. "You're here, because you want to be. Otherwise, you would have run back into your bed. And think of this place no more." Aricin's lips don't seem to move, except to convey expression, so was it a mask, or indeed his face?

"The way this place works, is that you bring yourself here. You can be brought here, but we don't dabble in that. Most people who are here, are here because they want to be. There are some who have chosen to stay all their lives, and there are some who move in and out of the place. Though, very few possess the power of access to begin with. You are one of the few dear, Calixx." Shauna, who surprised at this mentioning of the name Calixx, a name she used on herself many years ago, questioned, "How did you know that?" Seemingly amused by this question, Aricin replied, "It's a part of you. Everything that was in your past is a part of you, therefore it is readable. You too have used many names. So this concept is not unfamiliar." "So how did I bring myself here?" "I don't know. Something within you needed you to be here, and not there. I don't know what it is. I'm not a mind reader. Though I'm sure someone is." Chris (or whatever name you may have for him) perked up. "We all have our different reasons and ways of being here. We can't answer how you brought yourself here. But within time you'll figure it out." Shauna looked over the two carefully. "I brought myself here. I don't know how, or why. Am I necessary? Because, I get the impression that I am. But I'm not sure." Aricin's red marked eyes were focused on her. He had short white hair that seemed to glisten from the untraceable light source. "Yes, we need you. But it's your choice whether or not you want to stay. It all comes down to you." "How did you bring your own selves here?" Chris looked over at Aricin, and then at her, "You need not know that now. Timing is running out." She herself could not figure things out. Here she was in a place that claims to not be a dream, but it has no name, and everything was different. These people kept telling her she was connected to the sun, therefore necessary. But, she still had a life elsewhere. With friends and family. And all this was too odd. There was no reason to stay, with everything she loved back at home. "I cannot find reasons to be here. Perhaps I should go home," she said to them in a low voice. Aricin had a straight line to represent his mouth. "Fine, then go home. But I should warn you; you're the reason why you're here. Maybe you need to figure out why you brought yourself here before running back," and

with that Aricin stood up and vanished. Chris looked defeated in his chair. "Then back home you shall go," said Chris to her. "What am I to call you?" she asked fearfully. "That really doesn't matter, now does it?" came the answer in a low voice.

Chris stood up and so did she shortly after. They walked to the door, and Shauna took a last look around the room. What an interesting place, she thought to herself. Chris opened the door for her, and closed it after they both walked out. The halls, which only a short while before looked gray, were now bluish. They hooked a left and Chris grabbed his cape and led her out of the castle. They walked together in silence for a few minutes before Shauna said to him, "I tried to kill myself a few hours ago." He looked down at the cape in his hands and said to her, "I figured." "Could that be why I'm here?" "I'm surprised that you have no questions as to what just happened." "I've grown bored of my life," she said wistfully into the wind. "Maybe a part of you felt the need to be here, because you were dying over there." "Maybe." They sort of stopped a bit, and then Shauna staring at the ground said, "I would miss my friends." Chris, who now looked kind of sad himself replied, "Yeah, that tends to happen. But if you don't want to be here, then I can't do anything about it. So go, be with your friends, slowly dying. Eventually it will end. A sad pathetic life." "Are you leaving me to find my way back?" she asked in a worried manner. "No, I brought you here, I'll take you back. Not back home, but back to the passageway you came from." And with that, they headed back to the island of 126th Street. Through the village, which was now darkened, past the green and purple grass, to the waters where the mahogany ship stayed afloat. "I've so many questions," she whispered to Chris. "As I'm sure you do. But none of that matters." So the two boarded the ship. So many questions, about the world, the people, the passageways, the children, the ship that seems to stay afloat, and not have a conductor.

Meanwhile, back in a dark room, in some part of the castle, two white figures sat side by side on thrones motionless. "Where does she think she's going?" said the female. "She isn't too sure. She's figuring things out though. Worry not, my love," said Aricin to his queen. "And what of our beloved little Tear-Dragon?" "He'll be fine," replied Aricin.

The mahogany ship docked at the location of the little island. The two of them walked calmly down the reversed street, to her house. Up the stairs and through the doors, they made their way up to her room. And when they arrived, shards of mirror scattered the floor. "Was I supposed to get back through that mirror?" she asked Chris fearfully. "Ah, this has never happened. Yes, but you can still find a way back. If you trully want to go back, focus on it. You'll be there," he replied to her. Kneeling down to pick at shards, she kept concentrating on how much she wanted to be home. She could feel Chris' dark brown with laces of purple eyes burning into her. She couldn't. She tried and kept thinking of being back there. She called upon her memories, the people that she loved, the things that she did, the friends she had made, and nothing would bring her back. There was a piece of her that brought her here, and that piece meant for her to stay. Tears began to roll down her cheeks and she said, "I still need some things." Chris kneeled down beside her and asked, "Like what?" "My glasses," was the simple reply.

And with that, a dark silky matter rose from the shards and wrapped itself around her, dragging to her through the mirror. Chris fell back stunned at what had just happened. It was too fast, but at least she got what she wanted, or was it? He couldn't be sure. He didn't know her, but there

was something about her. He sort of missed her, with her incessant questions. But that was done. He had revealed himself to someone, and they still chose to leave. Though he couldn't blame her, after all, she didn't know. She didn't know that he never removed his cape or even his hood for anyone. Nor did she know he was a loner. The controller of the moon. But what is a moon without the sun? What is much of anything without something to help or contrast it?

As he picked himself up, he proceeded to vacate the house. Within time, this tiny island would disappear, being that there was no connection between it and the other realm. She chose to be there. He looked up to see the reverse of her clock. It would be 4:39 in the morning. At least she made it back on time.

Going over the details of what transpired in just a few hours, he thought to himself that this would be his greatest failure. Not persuading the Phoenix to stay. And with that, he turned around and moved away.

"You suck at this failure thing," came a voice from behind him. With that, he grinned and turned around. "You came back." "A piece of me wants me here, another piece wanted a few possessions, so they worked it out," Shauna said. He turned around and looked into her eyes. "This is going to be fun," he said to her. He looked over what she brought. She was wearing her glasses, sort of cat like frames. She was holding a teddy bear. She looked down at the bear, and held it out to him, "This is Krafty. I need him. He is a reminder of two beings." She held the bear and moved to Chris' side. "So what do I call you?" she asked thoughtfully. "You need your own name to call me. I don't know. I think you favour Chris." "I also favour Tear. Is that short for anything?" He laughed, "I'm not really fond of Tear, it just seems too bright and cheerful. But whatever you feel like is fine. And what can I call you?" "Anything you so desire." And with that, the two walked out of the house, back to the ship, back to the place of no name. "Didn't you call this place Islandia?" she questioned. "Yes, I did, and still do." "I'll have to come up with something of my own. I'm very much alone here." He grinned and with that put his arm around her, "No you're not. You've me. I don't know if that's a good or bad thing, but I'm here. And there are others."

"Told you," said a soft voice.

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## 5. A Crooked House

With her mind made up to stay, Shauna and Chris made their way back to the place of no name. They stood beside one another watching the purple waters ripple. "I've no where, do I? Except for my island," she said to him looking down at the patterns made by the water. "You'll stay with me. Staying on that island is no place to be." He shrugged and added, "It's too far away." "Where do you live? In the village?" "No, somewhere a bit off. I think now we can begin with your many questions."

"The ship. It's bugging me. Who controls the ship?" she asked quickly. "The water," he said in a cool manner, "the person who controls the water, controls the ships. It's easier that way." "Okay, so then who controls the water?" "Someone that you will meet in due time. What else?" He said turning a bit to face her. "Why are some things different, and yet some the same? The sky is blue, but the water is purple. Stones are gray, yet the grass is green and purple." He, who had been holding his cape in his hands, dropped it to the floor at this point. "Different rules, I guess." "Alright, I'll pick on you for that a bit later on. Why is there a king and queen?" Chris looked out; the path they were taking was a different one. He could see the tops of the blue trees that surrounded his home. "That's a good one. They don't rule here like a monarchy, well, they do oversee that there is some type of order. But not absolute. As you know, they don't like to be called King, and nor does the Queen liked to be called queen. Though that is selective." She saw that the purple waters were now turning red. "Where do you live?" she wondered aloud. "This place has no name, so it's really rather useless to give it's parts name. Though, this is where I reside. Alone. I like being alone." he said in a cautiously manner. "It was one of the darkest places here. So I preferred it. Travelers and wanderers pass through there, but never stay. I did. I like it that way." He looked at the blue trees, which were anchored to the water. The land of his place was starting to rise up, as they got closer. Looking at him, she remarked, "I guess that being alone bit is over." "Yeah, I guess it is."

The ship docked to the land, and the two made their way off. The land here was a bit reddish in colour where it met the waters. But as they made their way up, the land assumed it natural green and purple hues. The walked up a small path that was merely worn down soils. Up the path was a black crooked house. "I feel like I'm in a fairy tale," she remarked after setting gaze upon the house. "Slightly reminiscent of old fairy tales, yes. I thought so myself. Which is probably why I liked it." She stopped for a moment, "This was here?" he realized that they had not gone over origins. "When I got here, there were already many structures up. I don't know how or why they got here. Much is unexplained. We believe that Aricin and his wife were the first people here in a long time. There had to have been some others before us." "Oh, so that's why they are called the king and queen? Because they were here first?" "Yes." The two proceeded towards the door of the crooked house. Although this was supposed to be a livable structure, it certainly had an artistic value to it. Chris opened the door and pushed it in for Shauna to go through. The room they entered was dark and empty. All there was a single fireplace at the end and two staircases leading the next floor. Along the mantle, candles were aligned, and a single picture frame. He led her up the left staircase. "Both lead to the same, so it doesn't matter."

On this second floor, the room was dim lighted. There was a square maple table in the center, with four chairs to match around it. On top of the table and on some of the chairs rest a dark blue cloth. There was also a small coffee table next to a recliner. Shauna's eyes moved from the recliner to see that there were two doors, one straight ahead, and one off to the right. "I've one bedroom, one bed, so I'll take the comfy recliner that you see there. The bedroom is off to your right. Straight ahead is a sitting room. Bathroom is in the bedroom," he said. His eyes then left her to search the room. "Nonsense, I'll take the sofa, you take your bed. What are you looking for?" "My cape." She thought back, "You left it on the floor of the ship." He sighed and then sat down on the recliner, "I suppose I'll have to get another. You're a guest here. Take the bedroom." Contemplating over how long this discussion could take, she offered, "We'll both sleep on the same bed." He seemed content with this idea.

The two made their way into the bedroom. It was still bright outside, with light pouring in from the big crooked window he had in the room. He looked at her, "I guess you're prepared to sleep." Looking down at her clothes, she remembered that this was still night for her, or something like that, so she had on a white t-shirt and blue pajama pants. The bed was adjacent to the window. Across from that (which would be to the right when you first entered), were two doors. One she assumed would be the bathroom, the other a closet. Next in line, was a sort of mirror, though it wasn't quite a mirror. Near the bed was a small nightstand, with a backwards clock. Five zero six (for you, that would be six zero five). She pulled off her glasses and put it to rest. She climbed into the bed, and he walked around to the other side and sat down against the headboard. She laid on her side, facing the door they walked through. "Aren't you to change?" "No. Go to sleep." "You haven't told me much of yourself. If you're such a loner, then why am I here?" He thought over this interesting question, and could not come up with an answer. He leaned back and just stared at the other end of the room. From the angle he was in, he stared straight into the mirror like thing. In a very tired state, she began to fall asleep, but before she was completely asleep, she asked the question, "So why are you here?" With this question, his head shifted to view the outside. The sun was going away, and the moon was shining bright. It was the first time since being here did he see the moon in such light. He had always been able to see it, just not like this. So to this young man's luck, to his left was the moon that he loved so dearly, and to the right was Phoenix, the girl who gave the light to the moon.

He searched his memories to find the person he had been searching for. "Do you recall any of your past lives?" he asked her. "I don't believe in past lives," she whispered. "Not at all?" "No." "I'm searching for the person that I sacrificed my life for in a past life." Stirring a bit, she turned to face him. "You have a story." He laughed softly. "Yes, I guess I do." "Spill." "In my last life, I loved this woman dearly. Though I couldn't be with her." He looked over at the mirror and called upon his memories to tell his story. "Why not?" "Because we were one half." "I don't understand." Staring intensely at the mirror, he could see the shadows dancing in the corner of his eyes. "This has to do with soul mates. But let us not be troubled. I loved her, and she loved me, and we couldn't be together. When it came down to it though, I gave up my life for her. And now I search for her reincarnation. Normally I can hear her, but now she has grown silent. She has forgotten. Now, sleep." Much confused, but unable to carry on, Shauna succumbed to sleep. After waiting a bit, Chris looked at her sleeping face, and got up from the bed as quietly as he could.

He walked out of the room back into the main room of the second floor. There sitting in the recliner was a figure in black. "Arjun. Checking up on me?" said Chris to the figure. The figure turned a bit, revealing a very light greenish complexion. He had raven black hair, and his eyes were a sharp green. "Of course, father. Have to make my daily rounds to check up on you and mother," replied the dark haired man. He looked older in age compared to Chris. Arjun looked easily around thirty years old. Chris, on the other hand, looked like he was in his early twenties. Which was in fact true. "I take it you've found your mother?" asked Chris hopefully. "Now father, you know I cannot reveal her location." "Yes, I know," Chris said in a rather sad manner, "I miss her. Have you found your brothers?" Arjun's green eyes pierced into Chris' and simply replied, "No." "I do not understand how you managed to covet a pair of green eyes. What's your name for this life cycle?" Arjun grinned, which sort resembled Chris' own grin. "Thank my birth

parents for that. Daniel must have been off a bit, I suppose. They named me Gavyn." Arjun looked at the door to the bedroom, "So, you've found the Phoenix." "Yes." "How did you find her?" Chris didn't know how to answer this, because he really wasn't sure how to answer this. "It just happened." Arjun looked into Chris' eyes intensely, and spoke softly. "Be careful. She's a half. And so are you. You wouldn't want anything to happen, now would you? Especially since you find her comforting." Arjun grinned a bit, revealing two fangs amongst the rest of his teeth. "You may want to assume your normal form before heading out to see her." "I've seen mother already. And you should find rest." With that, Arjun's body assumed a smoke like state, and he moved into the bedroom. Chris followed and laid down on the bed. He stared up the ceiling, screaming a message in hopes that she would hear it. "Where are you?"

The crafty black smoke with greenish tint formed a small smile and disappeared into the mirror like thing.

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## **6. Pleasing the Lonely**

Time is a simple thing. It runs without disruption. Though we give it a measure, it has none. Things are subject to change, but not time. This world, the one with no name, had to face a minor adjustment. Normally, all there was was darkness. And now they had the sun. And not only did they have the sun, but a bright moon they had never seen before. All except Chris who rested quietly next to the Phoenix. Much was needed to be done, but right now he couldn't think of what exactly. All he wanted to do was sleep. For the first time, these people had a distinct time to rest and to be awake. Till the morning, he thought to himself.

Shauna woke up and looked over at Chris. He still wore his black t-shirt and blue jeans. The only thing he had removed at some time was his spiked collars and chains. She looked over at the clock, eight four two. They'd have to adjust their measure of time, if this is what was considered morning. She got up from the bed. The cold hard wood floor seemed to look like maple. She walked over to the doors within the bedroom. Then moved over to the mirror like object. Rectangular, it was two panes of glass with water in between. It served as a sort of mirror, but not quite. She shrugged and moved back towards the door. Opening the door she went into the bathroom and began to clean herself up.

Chris knew that she had awakened, but still laid in bed anyway. He looked outside the crooked window and saw the sun's light embrace the trees that only yesterday only he could really see. He listened to her movements and could hear her thoughts, and couldn't figure out why he could. He got up and went to his closet. He had never prepared for a visitor, nonetheless a female one. All he had were shirts for her. Perhaps a visit to village would be necessary for clothing, he thought to himself. He left the closet open, but still place some large t-shirts on the bed for her. He walked out the bedroom into the main room and waited for her. She reemerged from the bathroom glad to see clothes laid out for her. She walked out of the bedroom, and saw Chris sitting on the chair, and so they switched places. There seemed to be a connection between the

two, more so telepathic. He knew what she needed, and she knew he acknowledged. And with that, she waited for Chris to finish.

Chris emerged from the bedroom wearing a black t-shirt, black arm warmers and black pants. "Favourite colour is black?" He grinned and there alone was his response. He had tied up his long back hair. "I think we need to get you some things." Shauna nodded and rose to walk with him. "A nice wardrobe." She laughed, "Yes." "And what do you prefer?" Happily she replied, "Black, white and gray wardrobe. I need white shirts, black skirts, arm warmers," she paused to pick at his, "fishnets, stockings, cute boots, Mary Janes, and so on." "You're a little too happy." She looked at him, "Well, if this is to be my home, then I am to feel at home. Back there, I had to conform. I didn't get to be me. And now I get the chance." The two left the house, and walked down the path. I'm sharing my home with her, he thought to himself. He thought he heard the response; yes you are, coming from her.

They came upon the waters, and there was a ebony ship waiting. "Whom do these ships belong to?" "The person who feels most comfortable with them. You've been paying attention to the types of wood and what not. So do the other people here." They boarded the new ebony ship, which really seemed like it shouldn't be in water to begin with. Then came the words he had dreaded to hear, "And what of my friends?" Chris looked over her thoughtfully and replied, "Some may be here, some may not, some can come, and some will never see this place, not even in their fantasy." It was a rather short journey, getting to the village. They got off the ship and it sailed away in a different direction.

"Now, how do you have these possessions?" she asked him. They walked up the path to the village, it was much lighter than it was yesterday, with a few people stirring. Shauna looked at some of the people, some who looked human, some who looked part human and part animal. "Biotis," she said aloud to no one. Chris who was surprised at this, responded, "Yes, how did you know that?" "I don't know. I just thought of them, and the word came to me." "A past memory from a life before," he said confidently. "Whatever." "I didn't answer your question. Remember I told you before that there are some who need not a passageway?" She thought back and replied, "Yes." "Well, they are the ones who pass through both worlds exchanging goods." They came upon an old Queen Anne styled house. They walked past the fencing and up the small flight of stairs to find a teenager standing in the doorway. "Etayn, I'll need a favour," Chris said to her. "Ah ha Tear, I see you lost another cloak to Zale." Etayn replied to him. "You know the rules, finder's keepers. I left it on his ship, therefore it's his." "You know, if you ask for it, he'll probably give it back." Chris looked at her, "Oh well. I'll be needing items for Fiona here." Etayn, who looked amused, straightened herself a bit. She had bright pink hair, a light skin complexion, and gray eyes. Etayn wore a black short-sleeved shirt over a white long sleeved one. Her pants were a dark denim. "And you are Phoenix. Morphenia. Phoenia. Fiona. I bet you're a shape shifter too," said Etayn to Shauna. "We don't know all her capabilities, so let's not tempt? We'll need basics. Throw in a pair of janes." Etayn smiled, "I'll be back," and disappeared. Chris turned to look at Shauna. "As you may have figured, Etayn is one of those people that moves in and out of the worlds." "Doesn't she need money?" she asked Chris. "Yes, but she is paid. Compensation is not really valued here, but that doesn't mean it doesn't occur." He looked over his shoulder, and motioned for her to walk with him.

"About your friends. You can bring those who can come. Well, you can open the way for them to come; they have to come on their own. But it's possible. Some of them may not be receptive. And some may already be here. Whom can you think of to come?" Shauna looked around at the place she was in. If this was in fact real, which of her friends could she bring? And who would want to stay? There was Jamie, but would Jamie want to leave the place she loved? Or Mariel? How about Leah, Shaun, Sharlene, Arjune, Sadim, or Vauhini? If you had the choice to bring your friends, you would either be giving them a gift, or a curse. The question is, whom do you love enough to make such a gamble with? They still had a choice to return back to where they came from. But this place, this is where the lonely reside. The people who didn't fit in quite right. Who are we to say who is lonely? "I've many people," she replied after a while. "No, you don't. You can't think of the people you love. You have to think of the people that would enjoy this." "Then, I think we should seek out ---" Chris cut her off, when he saw that Etayn had returned with a few bags. He ran back up to the porch where Etayn appeared, and took the bags. "That should do the trick. And Tear, try not to loose these things." She turned around and went back into her house. Chris now holding the bags, walked back to Shauna. "So now you have clothes. Sorry, I cut you off, but who are we to rip out of their world?" Shauna smiled, for she could think of no one better than this person.

Back in this person's world, word had spread that Shauna was missing. This was odd, because Shauna wasn't the type to just run away. As a matter of fact, she sort despised people who ran away without any rational reason or leaving some kind of message. She knew what had transpired, Shauna attempting to slit her wrists only the night before. She knew that Shauna was fed up, and wanted something more. But to run away? That was unlikely. Grant it she was odd, but this wasn't her. It had only been a few hours since she received a phone call from Shauna's parents voicing their concerns. Normally they wouldn't have contacted her, but she was the last person Shauna spoke to. This event, shot her day down, as she took the day off to try and figure out what was going on. She had her own massive problems, and now one more. She went to rest just a bit; after all she would need it. She stared up at her ceiling just wondering why. Echo, she thought to herself.

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## 7.

### **The Adjustment Period**

There turned out to be three large bags, so Shauna took one, and Chris handled the other. "Obviously, if I am to show you around, then we'll have to put this somewhere." "Can't you ask one of those people to go back to your place?" Shauna asked. "Well, that's different, why would you want someone to do that? It's a bit burdensome. We'll just leave it with someone, and pick it up before we leave." Shauna looked up at the houses that made this village, all of which had different designs from different time periods. The only ones that looked the same or really rather drab, were the ones that she could identify from their own time period (present day). Chris headed in the direction of the Octagon styled house. He took the bag from her, asked her to stay where she was, and ran up to the house. She saw him go inside, and then a few minutes later, could see him by the door. He ran door back to her side, "All right, we're off." "That's nice where

are we going?" "To meet some people." "So why didn't you take me in there to meet people," she wondered aloud. "That's different. Let's go."

They walked up a bit; the way the village was structured was two layers, sort of. There was one ring of houses, with a path leading through, and then a second ring, surrounding it. The inner ring had the houses facing one another and the outer ring had the houses outward faced. "Is this the only village?" "I am the only real traveler here, and I've come across many villages else where. This is the only one I chose to stay in." Shauna looked up at the sky, "I think I'll prefer to call this village Ferrol then. So I take it there's more to this place? I'd like to see it." Surprised by this request, for most people would never go beyond Ferrol (as she wants to call it). "Yes, there's more. However, because of the darkness, others didn't travel a lot. Children did, but they would grow weary or scared. I, however, can see in the dark. That's also why I became the guardian of travelers." "You're a guardian?" "Not so much anymore, now that any one can move about." "Oh, I think you're losing your quality of mysterious there," Shauna thought back to the castle, "But there was fire, you had some light?" Chris looked at the sunlight hitting her hair, "Yes, we had some light, but fire can go out. The sun is a bit different." "You've someone who controls fire, I guess?" "Aspects of it." They began walking along.

A young boy ran up to them, he had silver hair, the bluest eyes one could ever see, and wore a white shirt and blue pants. "Hi Tear!" he screamed, as he got a bit closer. Chris bent down a bit, and the boy ran into his arms. They gave one another a hug, and then Chris straightened himself up. The boy looked up at Shauna and waved a bit. "Hi Fiona. We meet again," he beamed up at Shauna. Shauna looked confused and tried to recall who she had met, or sort of met. Etayn, Aricin, Strife, she heard the names Zale and Tempest, but had not met them. This boy looked about nine or ten, kind of like Strife. Chris touched her arm gently, "It's Strife." She looked over the boy, who was different from the boy yesterday, with green hair. The boy laughed, "Confusing the confuser," and ran off to a house. "An explanation of change is required here," Chris said softly to her.

They began to walk away from the houses, a bit past the two rings that constituted the village of Ferrol. Chris held her hands, and brought her down to the grass where they sat. "Very little is known of this place, and you'll keep understanding that on different levels. We are all our own connection here. Because we are different there, in the other dimension, our ability to come here is strengthened. But as we get older, and we conform, we lose capabilities, we lose the connection. Children are the most powerful. They aren't corrupted, they don't understand the way society works, except through their parents, so therefore they haven't fully conformed. Given this capability, those their powers may be written in stone, and cannot change, smaller details can. So they can change their appearance. You and I are in our twenties. Or at least will be, and you spent most of your life there, and so did I. We know what is right and wrong, what can and cannot happen, what is socially acceptable and what is not. We were active in our society, but didn't know why. Therefore, we've lost a piece of ourselves. Children, haven't. So they move in and out, change things here and there. But to make this a bit easier on us older ones, they always have the same name. You see, we can change our names, because of the little amounts of people in any given village. We can travel, but our face is the same, so a name means nothing. Our identification lies in our appearance. Children's identity lies in their name, so it is rare that you'll find a child housing more than one name." Shauna nodded, as she understood this simple

concept. "How many older people are here?" "The oldest people here are Aricin and the Queen. We do not know their age, and nor does their appearance show their age. They found this place as youths, and have lived here for all of their living life, since. Because the concept of time, measurement of time is lost to them, they themselves don't know how old they are." "Can adults make it in here?" Shauna asked. "Do you mean live, or come?" "Both." Chris took a deep breath, and continued to explain these things to her. "Sure adults can. If they really trully needed the escape, and still had a sliver of the connection left in them. However, many of the times, they make it in, just like teenagers, but they return back, only to write this off as a weird dream." "Why a dream?" Shauna watched as the light hit his dark brown eyes, and she could see the traces of purple. As if reading into her thoughts, he realized how quickly her thought patterns shifted to the attention of his eyes. Through her, he could see the image of himself. But he didn't understand why or how he was able to do it. This would have to be a question posed to Aricin, or better yet, Arjun. "They come at night. Their night, not ours obviously. When we straddle the lines of reality and fantasy, that's when our connection is strong, even if there's just a little. That is the time when no one owns us and we do everything for ourselves." "I kind of understand a bit now. But I've much more to ask," she said to him. "I know, but do not rush knowledge, let it come into being. Some concepts are better learned with different pieces of knowledge plugged into it." He began to rise from the grass, placing two feet firmly; he brought himself with his legs. He reached out to help her up, but to his surprise, she did the same. "Strong in the legs?" "Yes, and that only. I can also touch my toes without bending my knees," she grinned at him. "But your tongue can't touch your nose?" he said in a jokingly manner. "Certain things can and cannot be done. But don't you people ever eat?"

They walked back to the village, up to the closest house, a Gothic Revival type of house. Chris walked up to the door, and pushed it in and led her in. The house, wherever wood was to be found, it was in mahogany. "Noticing the traces of mahogany, right?" Chris said to her. Naturally, she hadn't said anything, so she was shocked. "Yes," she muttered, "how did you know?" "I don't. But this would be the house of Oki, who also owns the first ship we travelled on." "Oki?" Chris turned around to look at her, "Oki means ocean. She also loves mahogany wood, feels it's the strongest. Either she means it's durable with the ocean, or that she feels the strongest connection with it." "Oki, we need food," Chris called to the owner. Oki came in from one of the parts of the house, "Ah Dragon, how are you? Zale said to pick up your cape." Chris waved her off, "Tell him to keep it, I asked Etayn to get a new one." Oki shook her head, and her long wavy light blue hair swayed with her. She looked up after to reveal she had aquamarine eyes. "Careless and yet not careless. Hi...what do I call you?" Oki said to the two. Shauna looked up at Oki, who had an amazing beauty, something she had read about in the Greek mythologies that Mariel and herself so loved to read. Chris looked over at Shauna, "She's rather shy, as she should be. What do you think suites her?" Oki walked up to them, she was dressed in a white dress. "You seem rather nymph-like today, Oki," Chris said to her. "Quiet yourself." Shauna moved to speak, "Just call me Violina." Oki stepped back, "A lover of the violin?! Do you play?" Shauna shook her head, "No, never got the chance." Oki, pleased at this, "Ah well you're in luck, your partner there loves the violin." Another lesson learned in regards to the mysterious Chris. Chris looking not so pleased, "Oki, food."

Oki turned around, with her hair swaying behind her. Shauna quickly drafted up a mental picture of her, somewhat in her teen years, seventeen or eighteen, a very light bluish complexion, very

blue eyes (they weren't dark, or light, just sharp blue), and light blue hair (which was a bit darker than Oki's complexion). Chris grinned, though Shauna didn't see, but he knew what she was thinking. Oki returned with two boxes. "Here you go. You've got sushi, crackers, cereal, an assortment of small fruits, and luscious meaty sandwiches. You'll have water, of course." Chris shook his head and took the boxes, "Thank you." He led the way out and Shauna followed behind, waving good-bye to the lady named Oki. As they made their way outside, "I take it she isn't a vegetarian," Shauna said. "She doesn't eat anything that lives in the ocean. Land dwelling meaty substances, sure." Chris replied. "The sushi...?" "Vegetarian."

"I should take you to meet Zale," Chris said, as he made his way back to the Octagon house. "How about we visit another village?" she suggested. "I'll have to see Zale to tell him that he should keep my capes, since I've no intention of accepting it." "I don't get that." Chris looked at her; they were only a few steps away from the house. "Material things. They mean nothing. Stay here." He ran up the house, and deposited the belongings. He ran back up to her, "Let's go." "Shouldn't I see Aricin again?" "No, he knows you're here."

Shauna began to see more people moving about. Mostly children, about fifteen of them running back and forth, playing some kind of game. She saw a few teenagers, all-laughing and smiling, there were about nine of them. About five adults wandering around. A figure in a maroon hooded cape, emerged from a shadow, and walked towards them. This figure, seemingly shorter than both Shauna and Chris, moved in a very fast pace. It stopped a few steps away from Chris. "You've much to do," it spoke to them. Shauna looked at Chris a bit confused. "And you are?" Chris asked. The figure removed its hood, it was a teenage boy, just about, I think. "I'm Varick," the boy replied. Varick possessed blond hair, grayish eyes, and a peach-like complexion. "A wanderer," replied Chris. "Wanderer or not, if she is new, then she doesn't know what she can do. You should figure that out now. Where does she stay, guardian?" asked Varick in a tight voice. "You are new to this village. Yes, she, Morphenia, has just arrived, and I, Er-Tear have not figured that out. Within time. She's been here only a few hours." Chris replied coolly to the boy. "My village is worried," said Varick. "As they should be." "You've not answered my question though, have you found a home for her?" Shauna moved to reply, or at the very least say something, and Chris reached out to touch her. She looked at him, as he moved forward a bit, "Morphenia stays with me." Varick smirked, "Careful Er-Tear." The boy pulled his hood on and glided back to the place, which he came. Chris watched Varick glide back, "No travelling for today dear. The other villages know you're here. And they are afraid." "Why?" "Because you are very powerful, and you don't know how much, nor how to control it." "Why do I feel like there's something you're not telling me?" she asked him. Chris looked at her, seemingly a bit hurt by this, and replied, "Anything I know, you will know. Right now, all I know is that they are afraid. There's something that they know for sure. I have an idea, but that's all."

"Why don't we gather our things and head back home," he said to her. "So I guess I'm staying with you." He paused for a moment, realizing what his decision meant, "Yes. You are. Come now." He ran up to the Octagon house, and came out of the house with all the belongings. She took some of the packages, and they made their way back to the ocean. There was a mahogany ship waiting to take them back to their area. As they were on the ship and they watched the blue trees and red waters wash up the red shores. Tabris, she thought. "What will you name this place

that you and I live on?" Chris asked, quite pleased at the fact that he was sharing it with someone aside from the shadows. "Nagisa." Something within him felt a tremble, a memory of something that he had forgotten.

That's the thing about life. You are bound to forget. But you adjust there after. Regardless of what happens, change, adjusting, takes place.

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## 8. Meticulous Planning

Chris and Shauna got off the mahogany ship and went to their house in Nagisa. With their parcels, they entered the house, went upstairs, and began unpacking the things they had acquired. "Do you really think I should stay here?" she asked him, putting the bag and boxes she had on the chair. He put the bags down on the table, "Yes, I know this isn't the greatest place. I mean if you don't want to stay, then we'll find you another place." She looked down, "No, I want to stay, but it seems rather suiting for you. Not so much for two. He looked around, one bedroom, one bathroom, no kitchen. Perhaps she was right. "We'll find you elsewhere, but for now, let's eat." She brought over the boxes, and he pulled the bags off the table. "I like it here. I want to stay, but we'll just need some extra things." The two sat down and ate what they were given.

Chris fumbled with the images in his head. Here he found a companion, not exactly the person he was looking for, but someone to share things with. He wondered whether he could share this that plagued him. The images. Would she be accepting, would she understand, he kept asking himself.

"My friends?" she asked. This startled his thinking. "Ah yes, well see that's rather tricky, it depends on your friends. If they have a connection and whether it's strong or not." "Perhaps those in my age group still have a chance?" Chris, who was helping himself to a bit of sushi, looked up at her. "They've a better chance. Who do you have in mind?" "Mariel," she replied quickly. "Where does Mariel live in that world?" "On the next block." He thought back to the island of 126th Street. "There was no 125th or 127th Street there. We'll have to go back and check to see if it has appeared. If not, then she can't come." "Anyone else?" "Jamie." "And she lives...?" Shauna thought about this, "In Canada, Upper Humber Drive." "We'll check to see if that appears." "What do you mean appears?" Chris picked up a cracker. "The way this works is that not everything is here. As you can see. Different things from I guess different times, come and goes. When a being is born, and they have a true connection to this place, their home appears here. They have a passageway to come into this world if and or when they so choose. However, as they get older, and loose themselves in the masses, that connection begins to fade, or close. So your connection was your house. When you were younger, it probably wasn't just your block that was there, but maybe a few blocks. But as you got older, it started to decrease. Then it whittled down to just your block in particular. As you kept conforming, more mirrors began to be smashed, not by us, but because of your connection closing. The last and final attempt, before your island completely disappears, is the mirror in your room. Do you remember when I told you

that when you're about to sleep, that's when the connection is strongest? Well, your mirror in your room is your final attempt before your connection disappears. Meaning all of 126th Street would be gone. Well, for you anyway. Other people on 126th Street see it differently. A person on your block may walk into your house and find all the mirrors shattered or not. It's different for each person, yet kind of the same." "It's all about me then." "Yes. You. In the other world, you come to rely on others. Here you rely on yourself and hope for others." "Okay, so why mirrors?" Shauna was playing around with the crackers now. "Because they mirror both worlds. You can see both worlds. You're standing in one, and you're looking at the other. It has a certain truth to it. The mirror will never show you anyone else, but yourself. That's why many hate it, and many love it." "I think I sort of understand." "Then eat," he grinned and flung a cracker at her.

The two finished their meal; Chris began to clean up the mess, and told Shauna to go unpack the clothes. Shauna went into the room and began to take out the clothes. She laid out the clothes and began to take tally of what she possessed.

Three white button down shirts, three black tee shirts, three white tee shirts, two white tank tops, and two black tank tops. Thirteen shirts. (No wonder the bags were big).

One black plaid skirt, one black and gray striped skirt, one black skirt with lots of buckles, two black skirts with lots of zippers, two gray skirt with lots of zippers. Seven skirts.

Two black pants, three gray pants, and two denim pants. Seven pants.

Five pairs of fishnet stockings, five pairs of white and black striped stockings.

A pair of knee-high boots and a pair of Mary Janes with three-inch heels.

Two black neckties, one blue necktie, and one red.

Lots of underwear and two towels.

And a dark blue cape (for her, Chris' was black).

With that, Shauna went off to shower again. Chris came into the room, somehow knowing that she was off in the bathroom, and grabbed the dark blue cape. He also went into his closet and fetched a case and went back into the living room. He sat down on the chair and opened the case. Of such extraordinary colour, he pulled out his violin. How he loved this instrument. Perhaps he loved it because he knew from his past memories that she loved it. In hopes, he proceeded to play, maybe this would awaken her, and then he could find her. Pulling on his memories, he began to play Pachelbel's Canon. He could remember his role in the string quartet, and played so.

Shauna walked out the bathroom with her towel around her into the bedroom. She could hear Chris playing on the violin. She loved to hear the violin. She loved stringed instruments, though she couldn't play them herself. Pachelbel's Canon. She stood there listening to Chris play on his violin, but for some reason she could hear the other three instruments chime in. She closed her eyes and listened to the different instruments and they came in and out. She opened her eyes felt a bit odd. Looking down, she saw that she had on a beige dress, with a beige corset over it. The edges of the bodice were adorned with lace, and so was it along the bottom. She had on beige shoes as well. Her hair was long and wavy. She couldn't believe what had just happened. She didn't even know what happened, after all, she had not moved since leaving the bathroom. Chris in the other room, opened his eyes, and put down his instrument and came into the room. He looked at her and she looked back at him helplessly. "I was listening to you, and I heard the other instruments complete the piece, and I closed my eyes, and then this." Smiling, he came up to her, "So I guess you are a shape shifter." "How do I undo this?" "I don't know, but I think we should go in search for passageways for your friends." She sighed heavily, "Excuse me, I've to change."

Chris left, closing the door behind him, smiling to himself. Shauna looked around and got out of the clothes, and yelled out to him, "And what is to become of this clothes?" He, who still had his hand the door, said in a regular tone, "It's yours. I don't know how you got it, but it's yours." Shauna slipped out of the dress, and got into a pair of jeans and a shirt. "Tear, my cape is missing." Chris looked at the cape that he left by the case for his violin. "Well dear, I like dark blue. You like black. I'm sure you would have wanted to exchange anyway. So that black one is yours." She threw on the cape and walked out of the room.

"Let's go get my friends," she said grinning to him. "Great, we'll use my ship." He threw on the black cape and walked out with her. "I didn't know you had a ship." "You don't know much about me." They came upon the shores, and there was ship waiting for them. Designed the same the wood looked a bit different. "Teak. It's made of teak," Chris said to her. They boarded the ship, and it started to sail. "Where are they to stay? I mean if they can come and choose to stay, where will they stay?" Chris, who had not had his hood on, turned to her, " We'll find them a place to stay. There's an excuse to travel." Content with this she smiled.

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## 9. Testing the Waters

Aboard Chris' ship, Shauna could see that it would seem very much his ship. Along the sides, there were dragons engraved. "You've still never told me your story," she thoughtfully to him. "Not yet, dear. It'll take time." How handsome he looks, she thought to herself. He black hair was brought up with some kind of hair accessory. She could she that there were silver strands in his hair. Some parts seemed to be a very dark blue. The two sailed in silence, looking for little odd islands.

Hours had passed and they found nothing. "Tonight, the Tempest will be returning. She has been busy with something in the other realm, though she wishes to not speak of it." "How important is she?" Chris stared straight out across the purple waters, "She is a fire starter." "Doesn't that conflict with me?" Chris laughed, "Good question, she is a manipulator of fire. It's a bit different, though I can't properly explain how. You are the very being that is fire. It's is your life, your line, your blood, your everything. For her, it is just a thing that she does. If you were not to exist at all, or if no one were to be a fire being, then fire starters would not possess that trait." Though there were many islands, Chris couldn't find one that he didn't know. "Are you a biotis? A vampire maybe?" "No. I'm not sure what I am. Aricin seems to know. But I know I'm not a biotis. Perhaps since I can find now places out of the ordinary, we should test your powers instead? After all, you did show a small demonstration this morning." "And how will we do that?" "Our powers are connected to us, and can be pulled out easily by emotions." He pointed to an island, "We'll dock there."

They docked on the small island and two got off. "This island is in the process of disappearing. The last mirror was broken just a while ago. This means that for the sake of at least a few hours, no one will come to pass here. Chris looked at her, "This will be a hard task. But I'll go first." He

looked out across the waters. They were pretty far from any other type of land. Just clear waters, with no boats or anything. It was peaceful. Perfect, he thought to himself. He pulled off his cape and dropped it to the ground. Testing first telepathic communication with her, he told her to stay still, and not to move. He then asked her in a telepathic manner if she understood. Surprised to hear his voice, without seeing him speak, she replied out loud, "Yes." He grinned, and began to levitate. His hair broke free from it's holding, and she could see the strands of silver glitter. His dark brown eyes began to dance in colour, more purple was coming out, then laced with dark blue. His eyes became a dark blue colour, and then his hair began to change. All that was black, turned dark blue, and anything else became white. He closed his eyes for a bit, then opened them, and up shot from the ground huge chunks of ice. Shauna was startled by the piece of ice coming up, but in her mind, she could hear him calming her down. At this point, floating in the air, his hands were at this sides. Looking out across the water, he brought his hands up from the sides and held it out. Shauna looked at the waters as they began to rise, all turning into ice. Still in her mind, he was soothing her. She walked out to the edge and looked down, startled to see the ocean floor, with walls of ice. From beneath her, the ground began to shake a bit. He came back down and looked at her. His hair and eyes returned to the original colour she knew. "So you control ice?" "Water. And that's not all. But you may or may not be able to reverse the other things I'm capable of doing. Plus, they will drain me."

She stood at the edge looking at the ice glistening in the sun. She looked around, and she was surrounded by ice. She didn't feel cold, she merely felt calm and warm. He smiled at her, "Come on, try now." "I don't think I can. I don't know how." Chris came up behind her, not speaking but relying on the telepathic communication he thought they had, said to her, "If in fact you can hear me, then we've a connection. And that means that you can call upon my memories, my knowledge. I'm giving you access to certain things, use my reasoning, my emotions, my knowledge to do this." She nodded, as she understood everything. He backed away from her. Accessing his memories, all she felt was a love subjected to much pain. She felt this emotion trembling throughout her. And with his knowledge, she began to sort herself out. No, she couldn't levitate. But, she was a shape shifter. Nonetheless, she couldn't get off the ground. So she relied solely on his emotions. With heartache vibrating throughout her, her dark brown eyes quickly turned red, and parts of her hair began to turn red as well. The pain only grew stronger, she felt like screaming, the hurt only increased. Chris back away a bit more, she was experiencing too much pain, and that wasn't all his, some was hers. From her, a blast of flames shot up into the sky, the sign of the Phoenix, as the projection took on. It only grew bigger as she grew more hurt. Into the flames she was lifted as the flames began to circle the planet. Chris, reacting quickly, knew that he couldn't control her, but quickly set forth a layers of ice to separate the fire from the inhabitants. In different villages, the people looked at the sky. It was she.

Varick in his home, looked up in fear. Yes, it was she. And if she didn't control her emotions, then drastic actions had to be taken. He knew what happened many life forms ago. If she was in fact Lilith, then there was much worry, much preparation. Aricin, on his throne, grinned to himself, "The reincarnation of my sister." Tempest, who rested in her quarters, felt the heat. Even though Chris sought to protect them, she herself was a fire starter, so she felt it. She thought to herself, I suppose I had better meet this girl, and then return. Arjun, who stood nearby, looked at his father, and up at Shauna.

Because of the intensity, Shauna's flames died down, and she began to fall from the sky. Chris raced up to receive her. She still had on her cape, so he kept her wrapped in there, and covered her face. By exhausting her flames, she would need regeneration. Tempest appeared beside the two. "This is her?" she asked Chris. Shauna had melted all the ice, however, because of the layer of ice Chris has employed, there was a bit of frostbite on the ground. "We've to get her out of her, near heat." Tempest looked at him, "Who is she? What's her name?" "Shauna." Tempest stood back a little bit shocked. She removed the hood that covered Shauna's face and murmured to her, "So there you are you little scamp. I should have known." "Come on Chris," Tempest reached out to Chris and Shauna, and teleported back to her quarters.

Chris laid Shauna to rest on one of the chairs. "You're back sooner than I expected. So you know her?" Tempest grinned and began pulling out candles and lighting them around Shauna. "Back in the other realm, a friend of mine disappeared. And here she is," pointing to Shauna. Tempest was of a brown complexion, with long wavy silver hair and bluish gray eyes. She pushed her glasses up a bit. She wore a black shirt and black pants, both of which were of a good length. "In all honesty, I should have known she'd be here. She never liked the other realm."

Back in the other realm, Darshani walked into her room. She slammed her books down on the floor. This is all too much, she thought to herself. Between working to become a nurse and other problems plaguing various areas of her life, she couldn't stand it. She walked past all the picture frames to her mirror. "Fucking Ranev, where are you?" she sneered at her reflection in the mirror. She looked down at things. Wasn't things supposed to be better? From the mirror, a red shimmer came, and whisked her away to the other side.

The Queen jumped off of her throne and pulled off her mask. With a deep breath, she screamed, "Teeeeeeaaaaaaaaarrrrrrrrrrr." Chris heard the Queen's cries, and looked at Tempest. "Help me," he whispered to Tempest. Tempest grabbed his arm and they teleported to the location of the newest arrival.

Tempest and Chris appeared before Darshani. Tempest looked at her, this girl looked familiar. Chris watched as Tempest made her way closer. "Where am I?" she asked in a rage. Tempest looked around, she caught a sight of the pictures that were framed. This was Jamie, Shauna's sister. She had pictures of not only Shauna, but of someone else that she knew. Tempest looked at her and grinned, "Well, I didn't think I'd ever meet you. I'm Mariel. Shauna's here too. Come, we'll go to her." Jamie looked at Tempest and Chris. She was familiar with the name Mariel and Shauna. Cautiously, she went with them.

Aricin got up to comfort his wife. "Silen, dear, Astennu has informed me that they have found her. She is a sister to Shauna." Silen looked at her husband. "They have left Morphenia alone. Who is she and what is to come?" Aricin looked at her, and helped her put back on her mask. "I'll tend to Morphenia. Rest, for the period of Disillusion is to begin." He walked out of the dark room, up the stairs, and proceeded to Tempest's quarters. He walked through the doors and in the room, he found Shauna sitting up a bit. He spoke softly, "You're feeling a bit better, I see." "Yes," she muttered looking up at him. He walked up to her and knelt before her. "You are who I think you are." "Yes, and who is that." "You are in the reincarnation of the eldest. My

sister, my guardian." She looked at him confused. He removed his mask. He had a light brown skin complexion and gray eyes. "Call me Talen. Or Ten for short." She looked at him, and a name came to mind, Chronos. "Yes," he grinned, "there are traces of memory within."

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## 10. The Reign of Disillusionment

"Talen?" Shauna stammered to the King kneeling before her. A white silk covered his body from head to toe, the only left uncovered was that which where the mask had been removed. "I know you are dazed and confused, and still a bit drained, but alas, Astennu has informed me that Darshani, excuse me, Jamie, has made her way through. Mariel and Astennu went to meet her." Shauna peered into the face that looked up at her, they bore no resemblance, but there was something deeper that could relate the two. "You are searching for a link, a reason, as to why I call you sister." Shauna looked up at him, and replied, "Yes. This is all too much for less than one day." He reached up and stroked her hair, which had grown a considerable length because of the testing. "You did well. I saw you." Shauna looked at him, noticing the length for the first time, "How did you see me? And why is my hair so long?" Talen gave a soft chuckle, "We've a telepathic communication, our kind. It's our gift." Her eyes widened a bit, "What do you mean our kind?" He stroked her hair, to reveal that there were streaks of red buried in it. "Your hair has turned black also." "You're evading the question." Letting out a short sigh, "You are not ready yet. I want to tell you, believe me. It would explain much of what's going on, it would explain you being my sister, but you are not ready. If I gave you this information, without you understanding the various aspects, then this would only bring woe. Within time." He paused for a moment, "Astennu is coming." Shauna leaned a bit forward, "You've a connection with he and I?" "Yes. Just as you have a connection with us three." "Anyone else?" Talen smiled as he began to bring his mask to his face, "Not yet." "If we were or are, or something, what did you call me?" Talen fixed the mask upon his face, the red eyes on the mask began to glow, and the black line to represent his mouth curved a bit. "I used to call you Morphenia. Keeper of dreams. And you called me Chronos, the keeper of time. You called me Ten. I called you Taene. Now, I must go." His voice grew silent as he rose to leave. I can see what you see, and hear what you hear, he thought. Looking up at him, which acknowledged that she heard, she replied in her thoughts, so then I can do the same. He nodded and glided out of the room.

Back on the island of Upper Humber Drive, a holly ship appeared to take its passengers. "Where are we going?" Jamie asked the two. Mariel began to speak, but Chris interrupted, "We're going to Ferrol." "Ferrol?" Mariel asked. "Don't ask me, Shauna came up with it." Mariel laughed, "Of course, she did. Did she tell you what the name Ferrol means?" "No." Mariel looked at Jamie and Chris, and said, "Iron ring." Chris smiled, and turned his attention to the water. How fitting, he thought to himself. They reached their destination of Ferrol, and the three got off the ship. They walked the same path that Shauna walked when she first arrived, up to the castle of the King and the Queen. They entered and made a right, and walked down the path to Mariel's quarters. When they reached the door, Mariel paused, and looked at Chris. "Someone has been here," she said to Chris. Chris walked through the door first, then Mariel. After the two made their way through the

door, Chris paused to open the door for Jamie to let her in. There she saw Shauna sitting on a recliner, wrapped in a velvet black cloth.

"Mariel! I have so much to yell at you for. And James! Oh my god, your hair is amazing," Shauna exclaimed. Chris stood in a corner and watched the three girls clamor over one another. "Mariel, how could be here and not tell me. I mean you have a place in the castle. See, I knew you didn't have a job, you were just trying to escape your responsibilities." Shauna said to Mariel. "And by the way, Tempest?" Mariel grinned and sat down on one of the recliners. "Oh come on, if I knew how to bring you here, I would have a long time ago. Plus we all need breaks." Mariel said to her. Mariel looked at her hair, "Black and red, nice. I didn't think your hair would grow with the release of your power." Shauna patted her hair, "Neither did I." Shauna looked at Jamie, who took a seat on the other recliner. "So, how did you manage to get here? We went looking for a passageway for you, but there wasn't any." Jamie shrugged, "I got mad. And why shouldn't I? I've got work to do, and you're here in a...where are we?" Both Shauna and Mariel shrugged. "Nothing in the books say anything about this. And we both know that Shauna would do anything to escape growing up." Jamie laughed, "True. How did you guys get here?" Shauna searched the room for Chris. "Tear helped me. Or something like that." "Tear?" asked Jamie. Shauna thought back, "Dragon. Tear-Dragon." Mariel thought it over, "I can't remember, I think I chased Shei in here or something," ending with a laugh. Jamie looked a bit confused, and Shauna spoke up, "Shei is her little brother." Chris stepped forward, "I think Shauna and Jamie should rest a bit. After all, they've both had a tiring day. Right now we all need rest. We can explain concepts to Jamie later, I mean she should feel at ease with both Tempest and Phoenix." Mariel nodded in agreement, but quickly put forth her thoughts, "But where is Jamie to stay? You've no space Tear." Shauna and Jamie watched as the two decided what would occur. "Shauna will spend her night with me, and Jamie will take up a room in the castle. I am sure the King has no complaints, especially against one who is related to the Phoenix." "Right" agreed Mariel. The three females rose to leave the room with Chris following behind.

Mariel opened the doors and all of them exited her quarters. They walked straight across to the other end of the hall where there were two staircases, one to the right leading up, and one to the left leading down. Mariel paused for a moment, then walked up the stairs on the right. They came onto the second floor which was a hallway with a bunch of doors. Mariel walked up the first door on the left, twisted the knob and pushed the door in. She looked in it, and said to Jamie, "This should suit you fine. Check and see if you like." Jamie made her way to the door and walked past Mariel. The room was decorated in blue, with fine pieces of velvet and satin. "You'll find clothes in the closet, hopefully all of which you'll find to your liking." Mariel called in after her. Mariel turned to Chris, "Off with the two of you. She needs to rest. And make sure you don't leave her unattended around candles." Chris looked at her in an odd way. Mariel shrugged and grinned, "She was a pyromaniac. I guess she still is. Now we know why." Shauna looked at her, "Yeah and you are one too." Mariel laughed in response to this. "I'll see you later James," Shauna called after Jamie. They all said good-bye and proceeded to leave. As they got to the door of the castle, Shauna looked at Mariel, and said, "I'm glad you're here, but where do you stay?" Mariel looked around, "Here. You saw my library, I've also a room and board." Her eyes began to flicker with more blue than gray. "I'll see you later." Chris and Shauna walked out the door, and Mariel called out to Shauna. "What is Jamie known for?" Shauna paused as she tried to

remember. "James called herself Disillusion. Something along those lines." Mariel sighed, "That can't be good." Shauna responded, "That can't be good or bad."

Chris and Shauna made their way back to Nagisa. "Tear, can we not do that again soon?" Shauna asked. Chris smiled and put an arm around her, "Sure Misery. Now it's time for you to rest." Falling into his eyes, she whispered, "What am I?" He looked back her, appreciating this moment for what it was. "I don't know what you are. I don't even know what I am. Maybe we're just broken people." "Maybe, at the end of the day, that's what we all are."

Back in the room, Jamie looked around. She was in awe of seeing her favourite fabrics strewn about. She walked up to the vanity set which was rather old fashioned, and picked up the silver plated brush. She looked up at the mirror and saw her reflection. She didn't get an explanation, and even though there were familiar faces, there was no reasoning. Unsure of what to do, she walked back to the bed. She didn't understand, and with good reason. Perhaps she should seek out Mariel, she thought. She walked to the entrance door of the room, and peered out. Everything seemed much different. There were so many doors, and she couldn't see the staircase she came up with.

Back in their home in Nagisa, Shauna flopped on the bed. Oh right, I didn't put away the clothes, she thought to herself. She got up and began putting away the clothes. Chris sat in the other room waiting for her to change and get ready for bed. She packed away the clothes and extra adornments in the closet. She fluffed up the quilts and fell back on the bed. Chris walked in, to find her lying perpendicular to the bed. "Space is already limited, you know." She turned her head and smiled at him. She adjusted herself to sleep right, and Chris laid down on the right. "You like being near the moon." "Just like you like being near the sun." She fell asleep instantly, while he stared up at the ceiling. His dark brown eyes had shifted to dark blue. His hair began to change to white and blue. His eyelids grew heavier and he finally succumbed to sleep. The two of them hugged in their sleep.

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**11.**  
**Controlling Disillusion**  
*or*  
**The Reign of Disillusionment**

Sunlight hit the inhabitants of this side, meaning Ferrol and Nagisa. Light broke into Jamie's room hitting her eyelids. With this, her eyes flew open instantly. She heard someone knocking on the door. "Wake up sleepy head. It's one in the afternoon, I think," came a singsong voice. Groggily, she got up from the bed and walked over to the door. "Good morning," shined Mariel. "Good morning Mariel," replied a sleepy Jamie. "Come on, we've much to do, and much to explain. Well, whatever we can explain. Hop to. The bathroom is this door right across from you." Mariel turned around and walked to the stairs which was to the right. "I could have sworn that wasn't there." Jamie said. "Things have a habit of disappearing," replied Mariel as she walked down the stairs. "We're having breakfast. Hurry up." Jamie retreated back into the room

to find clothes. She grabbed a few pieces and hoped everything else she needed would be in the bathroom. She opened the door, and was able to spot out all the things she needed. With that she locked herself in the bathroom and started to prepare.

Shauna woke up, looking at Chris. "Tear," she whispered. He groaned a bit, "I'm not a morning person, Mis." Discontent, she shook him. His eyes opened to reveal dark blue eyes. She looked into his eyes, deeply. "What's wrong?" he asked in a low voice. "Your eyes are blue." He smiled and turned over, "Only in the morning and at night." She pushed him a bit, "Wake up." He groaned again, "Mis, it's too early." "My sister" she reminded him impatiently. He rolled over to face her. "You know, you're kind of cute when you're excited." She looked away, "Shut up. Come on." "Start getting ready, I don't take very long." She sat upright on the bed thinking. "Well then, while I get ready, since you have to vacate the room, play the violin." She got up and ran into the bathroom. He placed the pillow on top of his head and smiled. After a few seconds, he got out of bed, and went into the main room. There was his violin resting on the table. He grabbed it, smiled, and began to play. After playing for a while, the doors to the bedroom opened. Shauna was there wearing a white button down shirt, a plaid skirt, and a red tie. "You've been tamed" she smiled at him. He smiled back at her and walked past her to get ready. Time elapsed, he walked out with a blue shirt, black pants, black arm warmers, and their capes in arm. He tossed her the black cape, "You've been tamed too. Now, let's go tend to this lady Disillusion."

The two travelled to Ferrol and made their way to the castle. When they got in, they went up the stairs to the second floor. "Which door?" Chris walked a bit ahead, he turned back and she could feel him smiling beneath the cape. "Which door do you think it is?" Shauna walked up beside him and touched the doors. She didn't know what door it was thereafter, but smiled at him through the cape and said, "This one." Her hand started to reach towards the knob, when he grabbed her hand. "I know you don't want to try this, but trust the door. Put your hand through it, don't force it." And so she did, first resting her hand on the door, she slightly pushed. Her hand went through. "Now you know how we walk through doors." "I don't understand the concept." He removed his hood; "Doors are a humanistic complex of keeping things out and in." He winked and pushed her through and walked through himself. She saw Mariel and Jamie sitting at the table with a bunch of food laid out. Still, she turned to Chris, "Is that kind of like the door not actually being there, a manipulation of the mind?" He smirked and replied, "Are you sure you're related to the Sphinx?" Shauna looked at him, "I don't know whom I'm related to."

Shauna and Chris made their way to the table and sat down. "Are we expecting anyone else?" Chris asked Mariel. "Not that I know of," was her reply. "What about your sister?" responded Chris. Mariel looked at him, "Tear, eat." Shauna looked at Mariel, "Selena?" Mariel shot her a look and she quieted down. "Jamie is a bit lost," Mariel said as she poured syrup over her eggs. "Well, we all are," Shauna, said. "That not very helpful," retorted Jamie. "Pass the tea," said Shauna. "Tea time. How very Alice in Wonderland," said Mariel. "The two of you should have to be friends to make a comment about Alice in Wonderland," said Chris to the bunch. Mariel and Shauna giggled. "Mariel, what are you?" asked Shauna. Mariel paused before taking a bite. "I think I'm a fairy. One that has an amazing amount of powers," she responded. "So what do you think I am?" Shauna asked. Mariel looked at her, "Phoenix. I don't know if there's anything else. We'd still have to test it. So far I've got teleportation, levitation, and the part where I start fires."

Shauna and Mariel looked to Jamie now, who seemed a bit startled about these things. "Well, what do you think about her? Tear, your opinion?" Tear was a bit startled because it seemed like Shauna and Mariel had said it at the same time. "I don't know, I mean, we don't even know how Jamie got here. I mean, Jamie, you're the first person who got here without having a guardian escort you, strengthen the passageway for you, and to come during day." Chris said to Jamie. "Wait, information over load. We've skipped some things." Shauna called out quickly. So, Mariel and Chris took the responsibility of going over details of connection, passageways, the purpose of day and night travels, and so forth.

"You are capable of something extraordinary in that dimension. The question is, what is it in this dimension." Tear said after the explanation was complete. "I don't know," responded Jamie. "And neither do we," replied Chris. Mariel and Shauna nodded in agreement. "Didn't you say that you tested Shauna's powers?" Jamie asked hopefully. "There's a difference, Shauna's entering into this realm caused the sun to appear. So right away we knew what she was capable of. We also established that there was a telepathic connection to Tear. Therefore all she had to do was access his memories in order to test her own." Mariel responded while buttering her bread. Shauna looked at Mariel, "So how did you figure out yours?" "I sort of came with someone. So with this person, we figured it out." Shauna narrowed her eyes at Mariel, "Whom?" Mariel looked around, in a jokingly way, "Oh you don't know her. We'll save that set of troubles for later." "Okay, but basically how did you do it?" Shauna asked Mariel. Shauna reached out for the crackers. Mariel shrugged a bit, "I had fun." Chris smirked, "You had too much fun. That was the problem." Shauna glanced at Chris, "And do you Tear, know who Mariel had too much fun with." He smiled, "Hey if she won't tell, then I won't" Mariel laughed and said "High five," holding out her hand. The three – Mariel, Chris, and Shauna – looked over at Jamie. So all Jamie had to do was have fun. They had never seen anyone look so scared before.

"Um, Shauna, if Jamie controls disillusion, or is disillusion, do you think this place will disappear?" "I sure hope not."

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## 12. Suspension *or* The Reign of Disillusionment *(cont.)*

As breakfast came to an end, Mariel levitated a bit over the ground. She looked over the table and began to move her hands around. Chris, Shauna, and Jamie looked up at her. The items that were on the table began flying about. Shauna raised an eyebrow; "I don't recall you saying anything about moving objects." Mariel grinned down on her, "Oh come on, I uh, just learned it. Apparently I've got telekinesis too." Jamie looked at her, "Isn't that where you move things with your mind?" Mariel grinned, "Yeah, but the art form is just wonderful." She winked and brought herself down a bit. "The first thing we need to do, is figure out what Jamie here is capable of." Chris moved forward, "And how do you suppose we do that." Shauna with a smirk murmured, "We have fun."

The four of them exited the castle and headed to the shores. Mariel, with her long silvery hair that glistened in the sun and her pale blue eyes, levitated the way there. Shauna, whose wavy hair now reached her hips swayed back forth displaying hints of black and red. She chose not to wear the hood of the cape, but still had on the black cloth which engulfed her body. Chris followed behind her, with his hair dark blue with hints of black. There have been some changes since first arriving not too long ago. All three wondered what their fourth person possessed, and what would occur. There they boarded the mahogany ship, and set sail for any island, which would be vacant.

After travelling a bit, they came across one. Stepping on the orange sands of this island, three of which began to wonder what would occur. Mariel had a handle of what she was capable of; after all she had detailed this island during an exploration of it accompanied by her own sister. Chris worried, for yesterday's task drained Shauna, and he didn't want to see that. And being that Jamie was her sister that means that she would be capable of harnessing much power. "So how do we begin? I feel weird," Jamie said to the three. Shauna came along side of Jamie. They surveyed the island's buildings. "We have always chosen our nicknames based on some reason. Perhaps they are tied to what we really are? Perhaps we should start with disillusionment?" Shauna said softly to her. "That sounds like a good place to start," agreed Mariel, who was now levitating a few feet above. Chris moved forward to pull Shauna back a bit. "Our emotions are tied to our powers. Try different emotions. Shauna used anger, and might have killed us all," he paused to grin at Shauna, "Why don't you try that?" Jamie turned around to face Shauna; "You nearly killed them all?" Shauna looked down a bit sheepishly, "Mistake. It happens. I mean Tear protected everyone." Mariel was laughing above. "Venom, quiet down up there," Shauna called out to Mariel. "Can we not use so many different names? I need to concentrate." Jamie said in a playful way. Jamie began to close her eyes, when Chris called out, "Wait, face the water. Not us. We don't know what you're capable of. Just call on your emotions." Jamie turned around and faced the water. She couldn't get over how foolish she felt. Then she heard Shauna call out from behind her, "Anger."

Calling upon her memories of the life in the other realm, or dimension, whatever you like to call it, Jamie thought of the things that upset her most. She was feeling angry just prior to arriving, so it must be anger. She had to harness this anger, but she didn't know how. Jamie pulled hurtful memories after one another; they began to flow like rain. Her dark brown eyes began to shift quickly into a dark shade of green. She was feeling tormented in the place she stood. Shauna, Mariel, and Chris stood back and watched from behind, waves were beginning to form on the water. A red shimmer began to appear as she felt herself slipping further into this hole of torment. Chris' eyes began to widen and Shauna could feel his fear. "I think we better go," said Mariel urgently. Mariel began to fly away towards any other place, Chris began to levitate, and Shauna's body began to dissipate into a black silk like substance. The three were trying to escape before whatever happened, they all moved towards the water, but then got caught in Jamie's field.

Shauna woke up in her bed, the space void beside her. She sighed as she got up off the bed. She stood up for a bit, trying to adjust her eyes to the dark. Searching the mahogany floors, she tried to find a trace of a slipper or both slippers if lucky. The light flickered on, she moaned as she

dived under the quilt. "Chris! How could you? The light is evil," she moaned from beneath her pillow. "My love, the light isn't evil as so much you are lazy. Get up, you have work." called Chris. He moved towards the half-hidden body of Shauna. He bent over to find her face from under the blanket. He kissed the silhouette. "Up, come on, go get ready. I've made you coffee," he said in a soft voice. She reemerged from the quilt and with a deep sigh, "It had better be good coffee." He grinned at her; he played with her hair. "So, what did you dream of?" She looked up at him, and reached out for the coffee. He handed it to her and kissed her forehead, "Well?" "Doesn't matter. I couldn't be with you there." She looked up and saw Krafty her teddy bear sitting on the bed.

Chris walked into his home and headed straight for the kitchen. There she was, baking brownies. She must have had a bad day, he thought to himself. For some reason, he couldn't see her face though. He looked along the kitchen counter top and there was his old violin.

Sitting in the restaurant with the man she loved most in the world, Mariel couldn't be happier. She has her masters and was well renowned for her latest book. She had managed a stable income, was well off, and free from societal burdens. She looked across the table and saw her Rumi book.

Just before Disillusion unleashed her glorifying red shimmer field, the King held his hand out, creating a force field protecting his wife and himself. He could see what was going on in Chris' and Shauna's mind. He had a vague feeling that he wasn't the only one. Disillusion wielded the power to make people see and believe their deepest desire or something closest to it. The ability that she also wield, was that these people whom which got caught in this field, allowed their minds to be searched by her. Jamie stood motionless, as she took in all of these people's dreams, desires and thoughts.

The King and the Queen stood up side by side. If the Queen left his side, then she too would fall into Jamie's field, which is like a state of suspension. This was not only his protection, but also his mode of travel. He focused on the point where he wanted to be, and force field moved his wife and himself to the place, right behind Jamie. He looked at his wife, "Darling, you'll be fine, just give me a moment." He kissed her and she stood aside. She fell to the ground and slowly began to float upward. The King quickly harnessed some power to shake the earth beneath her. She tumbled losing her grip on everything and all the bodies that were trapped in her field that had been floating, all started to fall back to their place, whether it were land or sea.

Jamie looked up at the person that caused her to tumble. "Who are you?" she asked the figure. A straight black line appeared for the mouth and the red eyes began to glow. "See that's a tricky thing. I'm the king. And now it's time for me to take my leave." Turning around quickly to help his wife up, the two glided away. Jamie, who was confused, turned to see Mariel, Chris, and Shauna falling towards the water. And she had no idea how to stop them.

The water engulfed the three who landed in different areas, quickly dragging two of them down. Chris opened his eyes; he was no stranger to water, for he loved it dearly. Tempest soared out of the water, the water had awaken her. Plus she disliked the feeling of being dragged. Chris closed his eyes; he could sense where his Misery had fallen. But there was something slightly different,

a voice telling him to leave. He rose out of the water and sure enough, some feet away, a blast of fire rose out. And there was Shauna, flying with a pair of wings from her back. The three of which who rose from the waters landed near Jamie. "Are you okay?" Mariel asked, extending a hand to pick her up. "Yeah, I feel kind of sick," Jamie replied. "That is one mighty power you have." Mariel said to her. Chris walked over to Shauna, looking at the very black wings that had sprouted. He himself had wings, but with levitation, he didn't feel the need to use them often. He told her this, through telepathic communication. We aren't so different after all, she said back to him. "Hey James, you did better than I did." Shauna said to Jamie. "Yeah, I read your mind, we have a lot to talk about." Shauna looked at her slyly, "No, you projected images." "Right," Jamie said an odd sort of manner. "James, your eyes are green." Jamie let out a small laugh; "I always wanted green eyes."

They began to make their way back to Ferrol. "Perhaps we should try testing a bit more," suggested Jamie. Chris looked at Tempest and Shauna and slowly responded, "I don't think so. We should rest." Jamie looked over at Shauna, "Hey sis, why don't you spend the night with us at the castle? I mean, Mariel's there and I am. Why don't I see your place?" Shauna could feel a pang within her. She knew and respected that Tear would want his privacy. "I'll spend a night with you guys." Mariel and Jamie grinned to one another. Chris who had his expression tucked away safely under his hood couldn't decide whether to be happy or not.

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### **13. As Night Falls**

Night began to fall on the village of Ferrol and Nagisa. In the castle, Talen could feel Shauna's presence but the absence of Chris. Morphenia and Absalon. Eventually the two would come to realize one another. Chris always suspected that Talen knew more than he let on, and he was correct in his suspicion. He had been the first to be reincarnated, the first to be in contact with the children of the Djibril and Lilith, the first to understand the sacrifices and errors made. Shauna's past lives had not caught up with her yet. Nor should it. Chris' were making their way through. Perhaps when they realized who they were, everything would fall into line. He couldn't risk telling them though, for it is one thing to find out something and be forced to understand, than to gradually come to realize something and accept it. The first was confirmed, Lilith. Aside from him, the fourth, there was two more missing. The one that would complete Shauna...Morphenia...Lilith. The other to complete him. He could hear the idle chatter that took place above him.

All through the night, Mariel, Jamie and Shauna gossiped about whatever it is that managed to make their way into their mind. For hours they went on, discussing important things and trivial things. Finally when they could bear no more, they fell asleep.

Things went different for the sole traveler who rested on his bed staring at the moon. He could hear all of what Shauna had shared with her friends, and what they said to her. It pleased him when his name was injected into their chatter, and pleased him a great deal when he found her

thinking of him. But still, he stared at the moon, which had taken a rest for tonight. Some one in some other town who controlled clouds had given him the break he needed. Eventually I'll find that controller of clouds, he thought to himself. "But not alone," whispered a dark shadow. Green eyes pierced through him as the smoke and shadows gave into his true form. "Arjun, what are you up to?" Arjun sat at the foot of Chris' bed. "How have your dreams been coming along?" "I see her, but I can't see her," Chris replied. "Phoenix spending the night away?" "Her sister came, of her own will. Plus with the Tempest, why wouldn't she be there?" Arjun smiled. Silence fell between them. Chris hesitated to ask, but before he could say anything, Arjun responded, "She is fine. Happy, unsure, but overall fine." "Does she look for me?" Arjun looked at him, "You know she can't remember, but she feels it. She senses me when I'm around, but cannot figure out what it is exactly." Chris seemed unsettled with this answer. It would have pleased him to know that she, whoever she was, was looking for him. "Time." Chris looked at Arjun, and Arjun could see his father's reincarnation eyes turn dark brown. "I think I need her," Chris said turning away to look at the moon. "You do. Don't get too caught up with this girl, father. She'll be the death of you." Arjun winked and walked away into the shadows that surrounded the glass mirror. He definitely must take after her, Chris thought to himself.

A few more nights passed the same, with Shauna away, meeting him only during the day. Slowly his bitterness towards her grew. She was only around when she needed something. He hated her tremendously for that. At night he would try to understand why he would hate Shauna so much. He had no reason to hate her. She was with her sister and her best friend, all of which were helping one another explore the limitations within themselves. He sat up in his bed, though it didn't torment him for long, he couldn't understand it. Looking up at the moon, which had returned, mentally he began screaming for her.

In the room lying on the floor, Shauna stared up at the ceiling. She missed Chris, but she still remained at Disillusion's and Tempest's side. Disillusion walked in, "Raven, get up," she said to Shauna. "Changing my names again?" Shauna replied looking up at Jamie. "Whatever works." Jamie's appearance changed a bit, her tan coloured skin glowing a bit, sort of shimmering. Her long straight black hair was now blue black. Her eyes had remained a sharp green since the say she first attempted her powers. A sound of agony hit Shauna and quickly she jumped up. "What's wrong?" said Disillusion in a scared manner. "Chris is calling me, I've to go." Shauna's body began to change into a silk like substance and advanced towards the shadows.

Chris sat up in the bed waiting for her response. Disappointed he bit his lip, nothing. He began mentally screaming bit more. He looked at the shadows and there she was rising. He looked away from her, "You abandoned me," he whispered. "I...Chris, I'm sorry." He turned to glare at her. He didn't know what to feel, he was happy to see her, and just wanted to hug her, but he was hurt. He took in her appearance, her long black hair with streaks of red, and her brown eyes that danced with the colour orange. She wore a simple black shirt with a skirt. His arm warmers and spiked cuffs. "I hate to appear this way," he said in a mournfully tone. She seemingly glided over to him, and sat down beside him. "I missed you and surely you know that you've been in my thoughts, constantly." He smiled at her, "Yes, I know." "As I've been on yours." "Yes," he nodded in agreement. "I mean not to neglect you." "Will you stay with me? I promise not to act up again regardless of what you choose." Shauna flashed a big grin and hugged him. "Tell me a

story." The two lay down in the bed, facing one another on their sides. "She's my reason for being," he began.

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## 14.

### The Thousand Years Story

Chris took a deep sigh as he looked into her eyes. Before he wasn't sure how she saw purple in his eyes, but now that he saw orange in her eyes, he understood. "I'm searching for my love, my soul mate, as you would call it. I'm searching for the person I was meant to be with." Does this have to do with your goal? Is this where the name Tear comes from? How do you know she exists? How come you can't find her? Chris smiled lightly, and put a finger over her mouth. "Silence is necessary. I'll have to call on my dreams. You see; I have seen her in my dreams. I know she exists because I've that knowledge. In our last life form together, we spent much time apart. You see, we couldn't be together, though we loved one another, we simply couldn't." His eyes took on a glaze and she could see the tears brimming. He was reliving it, but he wasn't allowing her access. A single tear fell on the sheets.

"She was beautiful and bright. She loved certain things about life and hated some, but wasn't one to change them. She was a free spirit that took things as they came. I would stand by and watch her fail in relationship after relationship, but at the end of the day, I knew she was mine. Our creators created us to withstand time, and though our bodies wear away, our souls were always destined to meet. She was always the first to find me though. She didn't know how or why, but for every life form, she came to me. In our last life form, she came to me by way of her brother. He was assigned the task of guardian to her. You see, in our last form, there was a great battle to be waged.

Three groups fought in this war, it was battle of power, which would come to rule. You see our creators -- Ailuros and Pharaoh created most of which, and sort of governed over it all. Pharaoh and Ailuros grew weary and wanted a break, so the power would descend to the four first-born angels. I was the third, created for her, to balance her out. We were all created to balance one another out. But I am the opposite of her. With her, we are complete. However, as Pharaoh began to accept this, Ailuros grew discontent. Then soon the younger angels wanted the power for themselves as well. In order to create peace, Pharaoh aligned himself with us four. In his final attempt, he sacrificed himself to us. You see, our souls don't go away, or die, they get reborn. We have special caretakers for that, the lineage of Ra. In any case, by placing himself within us four, he could not be reborn. This angered Ailuros a great deal. So the war was lead by three groups. The younger group failed early on, so it came down to the children against the old order of Ailuros. You must understand this, my beloved fought for me throughout the war. This point is necessary; two of us were manipulators of life, and two of death. Now, Ailuros killed off two, a balance of life and death. My beloved is a manipulator of life and I am one of death. Next important point, any decision made out of love, cannot be reversed. You see hatred is silly, because it stems from love. Because of the power of love, that was forged. So back to where I was, Ailuros figured out that my dearest was fighting to preserve me and I of her. Ailuros left her

for dead, hoping to lure me and kill me as well. When I came upon the sight of her dying, I killed Ailuros.

I took my beloved's dying body into my arms, where she cried, as did I, and she promised me that she would find me in the next lifetime. With her dying in my arms, I tried to give her good memories to die with. The only thing that came to mind was the greatest gift of all. Life. I gave her my life, out of love. When she awoke, she realized she couldn't give me back my life. Because we were complete and my soul resided within the body with hers, there would be no reincarnation. She lamented over the loss of having me, or just me not being there, outside of her own. In her laments, you know that our actions, or powers are tied to our emotions; she didn't realize what she had done. Being one who had more power over life than death throughout all of her life cycles, she would not have anticipated that her laments would have destroyed all life." Chris paused to look at Shauna. She could see the blurry images that his mind possessed of the entire ordeal.

"It took her thousands of years to regenerate life again. Still she searched for a way to split us back into our parts. It was in our sons that she found that answer. In our union of both souls, a child is created. So there were two, my dearest Sephiroth, from over a million years ago, and then Asura, who was created in this latest union." He paused to look in her eyes. He looked at the moon reflecting its light on her. "Only those two were able to split us. This is my first life cycle in a thousand years. She is my goal. I will find her." "Have you found your sons?" "Yes, what interests me is that lovers can spend endless cycles looking for one another, but a child can find their parents without any problems." "So they found you?" "Yes, and they found her. And they watch over us both." Shauna sat up a bit, "So why...?" "Because it isn't their place to locate soul mates. It's their place to feel complete with their parents."

"You're an angel?" "Yes my love. But not in the sense you are used to." Shauna looked down, "Is that what I am?" "Yes," he murmured. "What kind of angels are we?" Sleepiness overcame him and his eyes began to close. "Darling Misery, go to sleep. I'm very tired now." She looked over him, would you cry for me, she wondered. She looked at the moonlight hitting his black hair, lightening his light brown face, and wondered about the girl he spoke so highly of.

At night, he and his wife removed their coverings. His latest reincarnation was now thirty years old, born with a light brown skin complexion, that often shifted from that to a bit grayish. His eyes were always gray, and he had black hair. This by no means meant he was human or a shape-shifter. He was the reincarnation of the fourth child, Adam. He was a carrier of death, much like the third child. The difference between him and the third child was that he was the realistic side of it.

He sat at his vanity set in his room and glanced over at his wife who lay in bed. She was glowing. In the previous life he had found her, a human, and together they created a child, Uliaha Yashmira. Due to the differences in their place of the hierarchy, or rather life form, she became an angel herself due to that. Their child however, was a half angel, which therefore made her a sahjina. Sahjinas were the most recent life form – those who are neither human, angel, animal, grimore, nor biotis. Biotis and sahjinas were considered to be of the same level, sahjinas a bit higher, since they were of closer bonds to angels. The hierarchy broke down as so. Angels are

first; this would have to be so since the creators Ailuros and Pharaoh were extraordinary angels themselves. Next in line came animals. Sahjinas were a mix of any of the other life forms, except that they are predominately angelic. Biotis were part animal and angel. Humans were a lower form of biotis, lesser of both angels and animals. Then came the grimores, the spirits or beings without bodies. Uliaha was amongst the first to carve out this category. Talen thought about his brother, the second child, who also bore a sahjina. Her name was Ahnaleaha. Both of them appealed to Daniel to send their children to a place where they could focus in on their powers.

Daniel was the sixth in the lineage of Ra, who was the right hand to the fallen Pharaoh. Due to the high capacity of souls needing to find a body in order to escape that of being a grimore, Ra was created to do so. He passed this task onto his children and so forth. Due to the fact that everyone had such short life spans in the last lifetime, the way things were returned. So Daniel, even though he birthed a child who would eventually take his place, still worked on the routing of souls. The soul collectors, Sorin and Savin Black, twins, who were also overwhelmed, also returned, doing their jobs. The three of them worked together to oversee the different dimensions and how the souls were taken and recycled. Talen had always been one to consort with Sorin and Savin on a daily basis.

Even though the third and fourth child was that which could manipulate death, that is only because it was necessary, after all, Ailuros and Pharaoh, the original creators dwell within them. Though it still is their job, it's still overwhelming. Ailuros and Pharaoh attempted to do things themselves, and that is what brought about their own destruction. That's why there were four to follow. Two aligned with fantasy, two with reality. And so you get the point. Just because someone or something is highly powerful, doesn't mean they are equipped to deal with it.

Talen looked in the mirror, in his gray eyes; he could see the sparks of red. Three of them have been found but one is still missing. The second, Azrael, the balance to the realm of reality, the carrier of life to match Talen's power of death. The two children who really were in balance with one another had found one another, Lilith and Djibril; it's just that they didn't know it yet. And that's fine; after all, it would hurt them deeply to know they must part. Looking into the reflection of his eyes, he could see his brother. They were all created in different ways, Lilith, crafted out of thought. Azrael, out of Lilith's essence (she had no body at the time), air particles, though, like Lilith, created for no purpose. Djibril, who was created out of thoughts, water materials and a purpose. Djibril's (or Jibril's) creation was set to balance Lilith out, a way to make amends for the mistakes. Adam, the last, himself, was created out of thought, love shared between Ailuros and Pharaoh, earthly materials, and a purpose. Naturally his purpose was to balance out the second child, Azrael, and to oversee time.

If you've been paying attention carefully, here's the way it breaks down. Lilith and Djibril are two halves of a whole. They are the yin-yang, opposites and equals. They are the balance in these here dimensions. Azrael and Adam make up another whole, but it's slightly different for them. Azrael controls destiny and futures (which explain his ties to life), whereas Adam manipulates time.

Talen looked up at his reflection again. He was older in this life form because Lilith had figured out how to bring him back first. He is the essence of space and time. This was his second life

form since the war. She had brought back Azrael, but the character that he is, he comes and goes, neither aligning himself with anyone. He was also in his second life form.

Talen sighed deeply. So many things to remember and call upon. He looked up at the ceiling. Peacefulness had ensued too long. There must be something disruptive. The arrivals of Morphenia (Phoenix) and her sister, Disillusion had disrupted their peace, which brought about a sigh of relief for the people who grew too comfortable. Now that they had for the most part controlled their more destructive powers, everyone would grow comfortable again. Learning doesn't take place when there is comfort. Nor does much of anything. When there is chaos, there is a need to adapt. There needed to be chaos. At least for a short while, so that the inhibitors of this dimension could learn more. He couldn't bear the thought of there being comfort to the point where Lilith and Djibril wouldn't fully come to terms with their past lives. In any case, Azrael would never tread in such a place where there was peace. He was a restless soul that loved to move about. When things grew still, he was off.

Silen, who rested on the bed, looked at her husband sitting by the mirror deep in thought. She grinned to herself. She sat up looking at him. Her skin tone was a very light green, with her hair in also a pale green colour. Her eyes, which seemed to be the most prominent feature, were gray. "I think we need to have an intervention by the Chaos Sisters," she said to him. Talen turned around to look at her, "Ah my Queen, what would I do without you?" A small smile curved on her face, "Let's not think about it. Come now, let's sleep." Talen walked over to the bed and sat down. He looked into her gray eyes, and kissed her. "So our Tear has told her of his dreams and thoughts?" Talen laid down, "Yes. But they are oblivious, kind of like children." She laughed and laid down beside him, "Well, technically they are kind of like children. It's all about getting them to remember." They looked at one another, and then Silen whispered softly, "I'll call upon the girl tomorrow."

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## **15. Publishing "A Raven's Tear"**

The three ladies walked down the block in the cold. It was a winter's afternoon, and a dark cloud had spread above them across the sky. The city area they walked through gave of a dark appearance, so it just colder than normal. People flooded the streets moving here and there, this was the city. Regardless of how dark, cold, bright, or hot, it was always this way. Two of them were of medium size, one tad bit skinner than the others. Though you could hardly tell, what with their heavy coats on. One wore a long black coat, the two, and a long brown coat. All of which had their hands tucked away in their pockets. The one with the long black coat had long black hair that floated in the wind; she had a blue scarf covering her neck up to her mouth. Her brown eyes pierced into the coffee shop, looking longingly at the warm people at their coffee. The one beside her, who was in the middle, had dark brown hair with light browns and it was medium cut. She had on a white scarf. "The addict is at it again," she said in a playful way to her mates. The last one, who had short black hair, pulled her pink scarf a little higher. "It's too damn

cold out. Let's go get coffee," said the one with the pink scarf. The one with the blue scarf laughed, "Come on let's go."

The three of them entered the cafe; glad to be greeted with warmth. They began to take off their gloves, coats, and scarves. After they had everything in hand, they moved to a table and took a seat. Shauna glanced behind her to the counter. "I'm up for some coffee, who else?" she said to Mariel and Vauhini. "Shauna, you know coffee, order me something sweet," replied Mariel with a grin. "Me too," chimed in Vauhini. Vauhini settled into her chair getting comfortable, she had on a pink sweater and blue jeans. Mariel looked around, taking in her surroundings and the warmth. She was wearing a white short-sleeved shirt, with a black zipper down sweater over it, and black pants. Shauna came back with three cups of coffee. "Sweet, sweet, and bitter," she said handing the sweet cups to her friends. Shauna was wearing a black long sleeved shirt and black pants. Shauna took a sip and then asked, "How's work?" Mariel and Vauhini laughed. Mariel was the first to answer, "Well, it sucks, but there's tons of books." Vauhini held her cup and then put it back down. "It's going alright," replied Vauhini. Vauhini looked around, "Wasn't Sharlene supposed to join us?" Shauna looked up at her, "Work. She's working through her lunch hour." Mariel trembled a bit, "Ugh, extra work." They all laughed. "What about you?" Mariel asked Shauna. "It sucks. It's all mechanical. I don't care. But this brings us to something I do care about," she paused and smiled, "I finished the book." Vauhini and Mariel smiled at her. "You lazy bum, you actually did it," Mariel teased her. "Yes, and I'm happy. I mean it probably will never get published or whatever, but hey it's done," Shauna said while biting her lower lip.

Mariel braced back on her chair. "So did you tell him yet?" she asked Shauna. "No. I mean I don't want to ruin the friendship." Vauhini laughed, "Please, you're just hoping that guy who haunts your dreams will just appear." Mariel shook her head, "Shauna, you didn't tell him yet? If you don't do it soon, I will. I will run your love life." Shauna smiled, "It's just that," she groaned a bit, "I can't." "Loser," chimed in Vauhini. "Thank you," said Shauna in a laughingly way. "What did you name the book?" asked Mariel. "Maybe in the book she'll say that she likes him. Hey that ought to be interesting. Walking around then he finds the book, reads it, and gets all flustered because she would rather publish her feelings than say it. And he is shy you know," Vauhini interjected. "Well the book isn't about him. It's about me, us," Shauna replied, taking a sip of her coffee. "And the dream guy," offered Mariel. "Whoever he is," mumbled Shauna. "How dream guy doing?" asked Vauhini. "Content," replied Shauna. Mariel and Vauhini checked their wristwatches. "Time to go. We only get an hour break. That's inhumane," Mariel said. Vauhini hit Mariel softly, "Well, if you hadn't gotten caught up with that book store, then this wouldn't have happened." "Vani, don't start with me, I saw you pining over that clothes after you took me away from my books," Mariel said to Vauhini. Mariel shot a grin at Shauna, "I got books." Shauna looked at her watch, "I might as well leave too." The three got up, went to get their things and proceeded to leave. They opened the door and stepped out, "Nature must really be against us," said Mariel. "Either that or we're against ourselves," came the muffled voice of Shauna. "Let's not start the philosophy again," Vauhini pleaded. "I just want to get a fruit or something," Shauna said. Mariel let out a gasp, "Traitor to the sisterhood of junk food! Damn, it is too cold for this." "Oh hush up, come on, I'll go get a fruit," Shauna said.

Leading the way to the fruit stall, Shauna looked at the man selling fruits. Middle of winter, options weren't looking bright. The man who ran the stall was peeling an orange. He looked up at

her surveying the fruit. He held the orange up, "It's the fruit of life." "She smiled, though he couldn't see it. "And apples are the fruit of knowledge," she replied. The man picked up an orange and sliced it in half and gave it to her. She looked at it carefully. Deep within her eyes, the colour orange was dancing.

Eyelids tightly closed flew open with the sound of the alarm clock ringing. His dark brown eyes tried to adjust to the darkness of the room. Beside him was his girlfriend who slept tightly. He reached over and shut off the alarm. He nudged her a bit. "Meredith, get up, time for work," her cold voice rose from under the blanket, "Correction, I've to work. Time for me to go to work. Why you wanted to be a violinist is beyond me." His mouth tightened, he hated when she acted like this. She threw off the blankets and went to bathroom. He got up from their bed and walked out of the bedroom. They lived in a studio of the sort, lots of nice windows. He was an artist, to the very core of his soul. Or so he imagined. He walked over to a room with little light, and flipped the switch. Light fell on picture after picture of the girl in his dreams. He didn't know her; he just kept seeing her and he didn't know why. Oh well, he thought to himself, perhaps today will be the day I unwrap the enigma that is you. The girl, though she appeared in all different ways to him, mostly seemed happiest in isolation and deep in thought. He called her Misery, he would have named her Raven or Jaguar or Tiger, but neither seemed to fit. He could hear Meredith hustling to get ready, cursing while she was at it. He went into the kitchen and put on a pot of coffee to perk. This couldn't be all there is, could it, he wondered to himself. Meredith came rushing in, and the pot was half full. "Can't you do anything? Go out there and find a job!" she said looking at the pot. She grabbed it, poured some coffee in a cup he had produced and rushed to get milk and sugar. He fitted the pot back where it belonged to catch the rest of the drips. He smiled, he had to. She was so busy, so unhappy, but he loved her nonetheless. He wanted to marry her and was going to propose to her. "You're always so busy, just breathe," he said to her. "Don't test me, I've a major article to submit today," she said in a monotone voice. "Oh so that explains your grumpiness." "This could be it Chris." "Good luck then Madame." He kissed her. She shoved the cup of coffee into his hands and ran. He smiled after her. Meredith came running back, "Wait, I need something." She looked around their kitchen for something. He looked at her quizzically, "Food? Your coffee?" She looked over at the counter and found an orange. She sliced it in half, took one part and handed it to him. "Good to go. Love you," she said as she ran out. "Love you too," he called out after her. Chris looked at the half an orange he held in his hand. Hmm, Misery doesn't like oranges, he does, he thought to himself.

After observing the orange, she took a bite into it. Memories in Shauna's mind lit up with this. An image appeared, she was standing up, and someone handed her an orange. She didn't particularly like oranges, but she bit into it anyway, to please this person. She giggled a bit as the juice dripped down her cheek. The person, he was a male, his bluish skin glowed, and silvery hair shone. He looked at her; he had these deep blue eyes, and wiped away the juice.

A few hours later, Shauna found herself back at a cafe. She sat alone with the book that contained the story. Something seemed incomplete. Her characters could never be with one another. This seems sad, but not everything is meant to please. It was cold, but still she sat outside of the cafe alone. She picked up her pen and opened her book and began.

"You see the greatest love is far from a perfect love. We are beings that are meant to be incomplete. We search our lives wanting to be with someone because we feel that it will complete us. But what is being complete? It is to stop growing. The greatest love isn't about completing one another, is maintaining something that you can't understand. You can only feel love. In this story, the two, call them what you want, Absalon and Morphenia, Shauna and Chris, Misery and Tear, Dragon and Phoenix, and so on, share the one greatest love that all should hold their own to. That doesn't mean that they can be with one another. It merely means that they must both exist. They both want the best for one another, but cannot be with one another." She put her pen down. It wasn't coming out the way she intended. Shauna took a sip of her coffee, picked up her pen and tried again.

"You see the greatest love is by far the most perfect love. It is flawed and damaged; it needs work, but as long as there is love, then its damage doesn't matter. We have led ourselves to believe that love will bring souls together. It varies. With you and I, our love will keep us apart. So for years I'll search for you and I'll see you. But to be with you cannot occur. Our love is great because neither time nor space can wear it down. I'll find you." Shauna looked it over. She signed her name and closed the book.

A great deal of time as since elapsed. Meredith walked into their house. There was Chris waiting at the table. "How was work?" she asked her husband. He looked at her, "Normal." She smiled, "A co-worker said that this book was worth reading. If you're anti-romance or something like that." Chris laughed at this. She handed him the book, "Your name appears in it." He flipped through the pages. It was a hardcover, not a great deal of pages. It was blue, bound in black. On the front had a depressed image of a raven and a teardrop. "Raven's Tear," he murmured. Meredith shrugged, "I don't know." He opened the front, and the back of the front cover was some handwriting. "Let time come to pass. Destiny is already written. Some things cannot be changed. Love, Seen," he read the note. "You've got interesting co-workers," he replied. She smiled and walked away, "I'm hungry." He turned to the page of the dedication and read to himself what was written, "Alas a dedication can only be written by the author and she didn't leave one." Chris looked over the book, it didn't look interesting, and there was no synopsis either. But still he felt he ought to, after all, it pleased him to see what they would do to a character of his name. He began reading.

A few hours later, sitting in the same seat, he closed the book. Bewildered, he ran up to Meredith, "Do you have the cover for the book?" Meredith looked at him, "No, why?" He turned away and went to his computer. "The author. I need to see the author." Meredith looked up at him dazed. He grabbed his laptop and searched for the book. Yes, it was unknown. Yes, the author never set out to publish it, so instead her friends gathered it and published it. He opened up a site, and found her picture. Dumbfounded, he couldn't believe that he was staring at his Misery. Meredith came downstairs, "What's wrong?" Chris looked up at her, confused; she bent over to look at the screen. She gasped; the dream girl did in fact exist. And there she was. "I don't know what to make of this," she said to him wearily. "And do you think I do?! You handed me a goddamn book by a person I don't know. It was like reading all of my thoughts on paper. My dreams. And they were all written by his girl who I don't know, but seems to know me." She looked at him; she herself had not read the book. Her co-worker, Seen just told her that Chris would be appreciative. He scrolled down the site a bit more hoping to find more information on

her. His eyes fell upon the words that made his heart twist. "...drowned...two years ago...book gathered by friends and published in a final attempt to give her life..." Chris jumped up from his chair; memories flooded him, as he fell to the floor. Meredith stepped back, scared of what was happening. He cried, for the pain consumed him. She had spent another life cycle searching for him and he refused her. It was her that was calling out to him, and he shut her up. Things made sense, but they didn't, and it all just hurt. He felt sharp pains throughout his body. A voice called out to him, entering his mind, "Calm down. Yes, she has died. She has also been reborn. She awaits you." Chris knew this voice and it wasn't his own. He couldn't figure out to which did the voice belong. He had lost her before he knew her. He could hear her voice, for the first time, in so long, it seemed kind of child like, "I'll find you. We'll meet again."

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## 16. The Chaos Sisters

The sun's bright rays entered the room and filled it up. Dragon opened his eyes slightly. Last night he told Phoenix what he knew, not all, but most, and shared the images. He fell asleep and some point and so did she. The laid next to one another with their bodies a bit curved. Dragon thought about their positions a bit. A perfect circle, he thought. Phoenix's eyes flew open; she grinned at the closed-eyed Dragon beside her. "I know you're awake," she said to him. A small smiled formed on his face; "Your sister will be displeased at the fact that you left so suddenly." "She'll be alright." They got up and started to get ready.

This wonderful light flooded Tempest's quarters; she looked up and pushed her glasses up a bit. Silen entered gliding through the door. "Tempest, my dear," said the white figure with black and green markings all over the silky cloth that engulfed her, "I think it's time we called on your sister." A huge smile appeared on Tempest face. "Oh, how fun," she replied. Tempest got up and went with Silen. "Are you sure about this?" asked Tempest, who floated along side of the Queen. "We grow bored. We need some excitement," replied the Queen in a coolly manner. "Hey fine with me, but let me warn you now, you've got me, you're bringing my trouble making other half, the Phoenix, and Disillusion. You're asking for some serious terror," Tempest replied. "Oh, I know," said Queen Silen, with small smile.

Tempest and Silen searched the planes for the mirror leading to the sister of Tempest. "You've a strong bond, connect with her," Silen said to her. "Maybe I should shift to the other realm and build up her imaginative bonds a bit," suggested Tempest. "Good idea, away with you," Silen said in a rather childish tone. With that, Tempest vanished.

Dragon and Phoenix made their way to Ferrol. "I grow weary of this place. Let's explore," said Phoenix. Dragon laughed, "Tonight we'll go exploring. How about that?" Content with this, they made their way up to the castle. There they found Disillusion waiting. "Uh, hi there sis," Phoenix said to her. Disillusion looked at her with an eyebrow raised. She grinned and laughed a bit, "With Tear alright. Yeah." Phoenix shook her head and walked into the castle, with Dragon following. Disillusion carved out her own room in the castle. So Tempest had a growing library,

suited to her desires. Disillusion had a music room. She loved music dearly, for it served as an escape and as her expression.

Walking through the doors, the three entered a room decorated in red and pink. The walls were covered with pictures of her favourite musicians, and she had various instruments strewn about. There was a writing desk near the window; one made of cherry wood. There was a large sofa just opposite to the desk. "Where's Tempest?" inquired Dragon. "I don't know," replied Disillusion. Phoenix looked around the room, "Nice job." Disillusion grinned, "I know. You know what makes it better? The colours and pictures change according to my feelings." Dragon looked around; he was starting to feel a bit outnumbered by the females.

Back in the other realm, Tempest returned to her family life. Here, hopes of finding Shauna were slim. Mariel kept coming back to make sure that no one would think she herself had gone missing. She had done this for many years, moving between realms constantly. She was one of the few that could do that, and she owed her little brother for that ability. With him around, she managed to keep in contact with the imaginative and creative side. She never went missing for too long. Shauna and Jamie were different though. They couldn't move between realms in order to make sure there would be no worry. A course of a week and a half had passed; Shauna was missing in this realm, which brought her family and other friends to tears. Just about a week or so ago, Jamie went missing. So now this realm, let's call it the unfun one for clarity, searches continued for the missing ladies. Mariel herself had to play along, pretending to not know where Shauna was. She had not told her best friend, Vauhini, a sister of the sort, either. For this, Vauhini would make her pay dearly. Who else to better understand? In any case, Vauhini was distraught over this disappearance. Mariel went to Vauhini's house and prepared herself.

"Vani!" Mariel called out to her. She ran up the stairs to Vauhini's room and threw open the door. "My Vani! I haven't seen you in so long," Mariel ran in and thrust her arms around her friend. Vauhini started moaning she was sitting on the bed studying. "Why are you so happy? Any word back?" inquiring about Shauna. Mariel looked away. "What are you not telling me?" Vauhini eyed her suspiciously. "Um, well, think happy thoughts," Mariel said grinning. Vauhini thought about what this could possibly mean. "I'm going to kill you for not telling me sooner," Vauhini said in a rather nice way. Mariel grinned and dragged her near the mirror. "See, happy thoughts," Mariel said cheerily. "You're dead. I hope you know that," Vauhini said looking at her friend.

Dragon and Phoenix looked around the room. They heard something; they glanced at one another and took off. "You know that's really annoying," Disillusion said. With that the music changed, and she sat down on her sofa.

Dragon and Phoenix ran up to the seashore to catch the ship. Phoenix was a bit ahead of Dragon when suddenly two grinning figures appeared. One levitating, one standing on the ground. "Oh no. Not you two, together," Dragon said groaning. Phoenix stared into the face of Vauhini and screamed with delight, "Vani!" Vauhini stood there with her arms crossed. She looked up at Tempest and pointed to her then pointed to Phoenix, "I'm very mad at you both." Phoenix grinned at her long time friend. "I don't know how to move between the worlds," Phoenix began to explain. "Oh please, neither do I, the only who does know how to is that thing up there," Vauhini said pointing up to Tempest. "I guess you can't levitate," Phoenix said. Tempest was

laughing above them. "Oh I can," Vauhini replied in a stately way. "Damn, I can't," Phoenix said to her. Vauhini started laughing and began to levitate. "Come on, it's easy," Vauhini called down to Phoenix. "I can fly; I have wings, but I can't get off the ground without them," Phoenix called after her. Vauhini came back down immediately, "You have wings? What are you?" Phoenix looked at her quizzically, "What are you?" Vauhini smiled, "That thing over there," pointing to Tempest, "is a fairy. I am a muse." "Of?" "Dance or something. Tempest get back here! I've missed you so much!" Vauhini screamed out. The two of them flew off somewhere.

Dragon was still groaning. Phoenix swirled around to face him. "Vauhini is a regular here?" she asked him. "If you mean, is Troubles, the chaotic sister to Tempest, a frequent visitor, then no. Troubles is just too much, well trouble. Pair the two and you get the Chaos sisters." "That can't mean what I think it means." At that moment, Tempest flames broke out amongst the village. Dragon looked at the two floating on air. Troubles' normal medium cut black hair grew and it floated around her. She took on a bluish complexion and her dark brown eyes grew hazel. "A fairy and a muse creating chaos," Phoenix murmured. "They are neither good nor bad, kind of like us all. Nothing is black or white. They mean well. Unfortunately their emotions are heavily tied to their powers. So chaos ensues when they get excited. Neither good nor bad," Dragon said as he watched the two. "Yeah," said Phoenix, "You know they act the same in the other realm." Dragon sighed, "Perfect time to travel, don't you think?" Troubles had begun to call upon her strength now as she chased her sister who tried to light her hair on fire. "Perfect," replied Phoenix.

Phoenix and Dragon walked to the shores leaving the chaotic sisters chasing one another. "I think Aricin is up to something," Dragon said as they boarded the ship. It was the ship of teak, Dragon's own. "Possibly. I hate to leave Disillusion with them," Phoenix said. She watched the skies turn different shades of gray and watched the lights dance across the sky. "I'm sure she'll feel right at home when she sees the nonsense they are up to," Dragon said in a reassuring way. He drew her near and hugged her.

A white figure, it's hard to distinguish his form, floated under the water beneath the ship. Guiding it along, he waited patiently for the ship's visitors. Eventually.

Disillusion sat in her music room looking at the sky. She knew that Phoenix and Dragon were off traveling. She knew that Tempest and Troubles were stirring up trouble. She knew much, after all, it was her gift. What troubled her most were the few figures whose minds she couldn't read. The black shadow with a hint of green, the white figure that rested in the waters, the King, the Queen, someone named Varick, and a shape-shifter who sought blood. She closed her eyes and shuddered a bit. When she opened them, there were two figures before her. "You know Disillusion, you would be of much service if you helped us," said Tempest. The other Disillusion sort of recognized. Tempest tugged on Troubles' arm, "Vani this is Jamie, Jamie this is Vani. Vani is a troublemaker, therefore we call her Troubles. Jamie is a mind reading illusion projecting something we call Disillusion, weird twist intended. Now that we've met, let's have fun." Disillusion grinned and got up. Her powers were strong, but she could control them enough to not extend to the other villages, which were very unhappy about that the last time. So the three made their way through Ferrol playing. They had no intention of destroying anything, things just happened to get in their way.

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17.  
**Drawing out Chaos**  
*or*  
**Reflection**

He sat alone with his book at the cafe. Normally, he wasn't one for cafes, he didn't like the atmosphere, and the over priced coffee and the addicts that seemed to have an eternal connection to the place. Still he sat there. He had memories of lives passed, but not as many as he knew Adam would possess. Adam, though the youngest of the four, was given the gift of time. He was by far the most necessary. So even though Adam was the youngest, he was still the wisest, and the most beloved. No one would know that outside of the four of them though. They had all been given the gifts of telepathic communication. Well, that isn't so much a gift as it is a birthright. As the higher angels, it was necessary. The farther you get from being an angel, the lesser gifts you are endowed with. That's the way it was, and will be. He could hear the sounds, thoughts, visions, that engulfed the third child and fourth child, but not the fourth, Lilith. He had long severed his connection with her. It was of their both undoing. He scoffed, for this wasn't the right path to down at this moment. He instead switched to a happier memory, which would deal with cafes.

Since the beginning of little coffee and tea corners, he could remember Lilith and Adam being drawn to them. He didn't like to call them that though. For the many lives lived, they had cycled through many names. Their very being at the core was given the angelic name, which was not a name that any of them liked to be known. What he preferred to call them is irrelevant and will only serve as confusion. Jibril and himself couldn't really stand coffee; they were never one for bitter things. Nonetheless, they accompanied one another to the coffee house. He could remember all four sitting around just sipping away babbling about nonsense. This was after they figured out who they were in life, but still a time when they had little to do. Pharaoh and Ailuros were still around. They sat around in the human world and pretending to be nothing more than mere humans. This wasn't the case, but blended in just fine. He smiled to himself; he could hear Adam's plan. He knew that Jibril and Lilith stood side by side. An intricate plan, but for what, he thought to himself. Adam knew very well that Azrael hated to enter a still place, that's why Adam brought the Chaos Sisters. He just couldn't figure why. He ran his hand through his short blond hair. He had blue-green eyes, a gift from his human parents. What you were didn't depend on whom you were born to. What you are, species wise was already written on your soul. His daughter, Ahnaleaha, was born to biotis parents. The way he intended, it would be easier for a sajjina to be raised by a biotis rather than a human or animal for that matter. He looked around at the fairly empty street. He left a few forints on the table and walked away.

Finding Adam and Jibril in other realm is easy. Instead he chose to send the message just to Adam. "I know what you're doing Er-Talen. I'm not coming back till they both fully understand. Right now, all they have is a vague idea, and that's not enough. In any case, what's going on?"

Talen sat upon his throne with his wife beside him. They were watching Disillusion, Tempest and Troubles all have their go at one another out of fun. He heard the mental message sent from Azrael. Silen turned to Talen, he raised his hand a bit, and then said, "He said he won't come until they know." Silen said simply, "I guess chaos isn't enough." "I think he's weary, he doesn't understand why we all need to be drawn out," Talen paused a bit, then continued, "and neither do I." "What is the point to this?" she asked. "I don't know. It just needs to be done. There are many who remember the catastrophe, and I think they seek to control it." Silen looked up and wondered, "But how does one going about controlling neutrality?"

"Exactly. There is much unrest now. These worlds aren't stable," Azrael replied to no one.

It had been a few hours since the three ladies started up their madness. Now they grew tired and wanted to rest. They convened and went to a dining room in the castle. The dark skies began to light up once again, a signal to the inhabitants that all was well. They sat down at the rectangular table and complimented one another. "Jamie, don't you miss things in the other realm?" Troubles asked. Disillusion looked at Troubles, and laughed a bit, "What would I miss?" Disillusion's face grew dark a bit as her memory flooded with things that she would miss. Being here, she had forgotten about things over there. Things had gotten bad, she was feeling to stress to live anymore, but still, it was a big piece of her life. She had everything she could want, with the powers and all, but there was still something missing. "Is that why you two don't just stay here?" she asked them in a low voice. Troubles looked up, "I mean life gets bad here or there, you just have to deal with it. Plus, my Bear can't come here. He's human." "Bear?" Tempest moved to speak, "Bear is that guy she's in love with." "We're not human?" Jamie asked the two. Tempest and Troubles turned to one another. Tempest raised her hand, "Hi, I'm Morgaine. Mariel, Tempest, Venom, it all means the same thing. I'm a fairy minus the wings." Troubles chuckled. "You know my name, Troubles, Temper, same thing. I am a muse." Disillusion looked over them thoughtfully, "How do you know what you are?" Tempest replied, "Because that's the way we willed it." "How do I know what I am?" Tempest and Troubles said in unison, "The King."

"Alright Mis, what are you going to name this place?" Dragon asked Phoenix. She looked at the sky, which were shades of red and orange. The waters that held the boat were purple. "Let's wait till we see what this place looks like," she responded. "Are we to spend the night here, or go back to your Nagisa?" he asked. "Hush up, it's just as much yours as mines. Maybe more so yours," she replied. He grinned at this and they prepared to dock.

Before going off to meet with the King, so he could tell her what she was, Disillusion returned to her room. She walked over to her writing desk and jotted something down quickly. "What is life without love? Here I am free to do as I so choose but I must sacrifice my love. This is life, regardless of where you are. Sacrifice. What does it take to be happy? Or is that an illusion?"

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## 18. Sorting Through the Madness

"It's different now," Sharlene spoke to the ladies beside her. "When is Jamie arriving?" questioned Vauhini. The three sat pouring over the many pages scattered on the table. "I know Shauna wasn't this unorganized," Sharlene commented. They were left the task of sorting through the many chapters and journal entries Shauna kept. "I know she wanted some of these journal entries to appear," Mariel said holding up a stack of pages. "What journal is that?" Vauhini asked. Mariel flipped through the pages, without looking up, she replied, "Her philosophical ramblings." "Why did she have to be such a complex person? She wasn't that hard to figure out, why did she go to such lengths to confuse us?" Sharlene was stacking the pages into piles. "I think it's a better way to convey whatever message she was trying to convey," Mariel commented. "Is that the don't grow up too much, don't be overly organized, always take time out to cultivate your imagination, never become too attached to things, which one?" Sharlene replied. The three looked over the table with the array of sheets over it; there were scribbles, doodles, images, journal entries, chapters with no titles, and parts that didn't even belong. "She had better love us for this," Vauhini murmured. Just then the phone rang. Vauhini reached out to pick up the phone, which was closest to her. "Hi, is Shauna there? Tell her I love her," said the voice on the other end.

"Disillusion, out of my head, now," Phoenix cried out to her sister. Phoenix was still aboard the ship that headed to another village. Seems that Disillusion got a bit bored. Phoenix looked at the bluish tint of the ship; she was lying on the floors. Dragon was beside her. They had not been out for long, but still they wanted to see the sky. "She's invading your mind?" Dragon asked. Phoenix laughed, "More like borrowing it." "What did she send?" Phoenix turned to him, "You know I kind of like you. So I'll spare you." "Oh it was about me," he teased. She reached over and playfully hit him. "I'm guessing they'll be starting up soon," Dragon said looking at the sky. "What makes you think that?" she asked calmly. "The bored never stay that way for long." "How long before we get to where we are going?" "Albridge," Dragon said quietly. Slowly he moved to get up and so did she. They looked over to the right of the ship; they were passing a large tree. Dragon pointed out to a line that was engraved on the tree, it glowed. "This is the village of Albridge." Phoenix looked at the text, and it didn't look like it was written English. "What language is that in?" she asked. Dragon looked at her, "I have no idea." "How do you communicate then?" "We manage. That's the beauty; language only seeks to divide us. In a way, we can all understand one another, we just need to dig a little deeper. We can speak a hundred different languages, but they all come down to the same thing." Phoenix looked confused. "You'll come to understand," Dragon said. The waters beneath them was a pinkish colour, that slowly grew red as the clouds began hide the sun. "The Clouds live here."

Disillusion sat in her room waiting for the King to appear and tell her what she was. How could he know what I am, I don't know what I am, she thought. She had grown bored of sending Phoenix silly little illusions. The King glided into her room, which had turned all black. He sat down the floor and looked up at her sitting at the desk. "I was just coming to see you," Disillusion stammered. "I know, but it's better to be here, then in a place you don't know, speaking to someone you don't know about things that confuse you. Plus, here I can tell your reactions that you try to hide," spoke the unmoving mask on King Aricin's face. "Why do you wear that stuff?" inquired Disillusion who looked over the silk material. "To hide whom I am," he replied. "Who are you?" she asked. "That's a bit trickery then finding out who you are. You intrigue me," Aricin replied to her. The eyes on the mask glowed red, the same colour that the

room was changing to. Disillusion looked around her room. "You're a muse," Aricin said flatly. "A muse? Of what? And how? And how is that intriguing?" came the questions from Disillusion. The lines on Aricin's mask began to change a bit, into a smile. "A muse of music. That's why you get along so well with Troubles." "How do you know if I get along with her?" Disillusion threw back. "Trust me. You're a muse. In the schematics of things, this makes you a biotis." Disillusion's face shifted, she was confused at this, yet found comfort in knowing. "A biotis?" "Are half angels and half animals." "I am not half animal." "You would think so. But a human cannot be a mind reader, a caster of illusions, control the waters, and possess the power of invisibility. Perhaps a sajjina, but the last I checked, you were no direct daughter of an angel." Disillusion's face tensed, these were all words, and concepts she had never heard before. "Are all muses biotis?" "Correct, and so are all fairies, as well as what you call vampires and werewolves." "Because they are half human and half animal." Aricin's mask could not portray shock, but he continued on, "Shocking, biotis are closer to humans and animals rather than angels. Sajiinas are closer to angels." "Why are you shocked?" "I don't recall aligning biotis with humans." Disillusion thought back, and then decided to push her question, "Then what is Violina?" "Wouldn't you like to know what Phoenix or Violina as you call her, is?" "Ah, yes, hence the asking," she said rather calmly. "She is an angel. She doesn't know it yet, but she will soon. But that's one of the lower reasons why you intrigue me." He lifted his hands and across from him, on the desk, a sheet of paper raised up, the one she had written on. "Life isn't always about sacrificing. At least I'd like to believe that while I reside here," he said. Disillusion looked away, sort of angry at the fact that he knew what she had written and that he would say such a thing. "How could you say that, when your wife is here? You don't see Tempest's boyfriend, or Troubles boyfriend. I mean, so Phoenix has an infatuation with Dragon, big deal, but he wasn't there before. You don't see our significant others," she said rather coldly to him. Aricin looked away, she was right. "I can't control the beings that you are," he said in a low voice. "What are you then?" she charged. "That's irrelevant. I must go now," he said and vanished leaving behind orange rings that were quickly fading.

Aricin sat alone in a dark room thinking of what Disillusion said to him. She was right on some level. He was an angel, Adam to be precise, and he was able to manipulate beings. Given his standings, he was one of the few to be able to change a soul's being. He thought about the females who resided in this realm. Yes, most of them were happy with a mate. Not all of them with their soul mate, but a mate. These girls had no one except one another. Phoenix was happy, but what of her sister, and her best friends? Perhaps it was time to bend the rules a little to ensure happiness. He had done it before for Azrael, Jibril, Lilith, Uliaha, Silen, and his own good friend, Craven, so why not a friend of his beloved few? Such a task would require time. The question that remained was who? He had no intention of pleasing everyone, just a few. You can't please everyone, they can't all be happy. Some must be sad. He looked up and bent his head a little. Phoenix and Dragon had arrived in Albridge. Yet here he was, in Ferrol, with Azrael in the other dimension refusing to come. He stood up and walked around in circles. He replayed what had happened with Disillusion. She didn't know that he too possessed telepathic communication, much so to a greater degree. She was beginning to learn how to hide thoughts though. There was something she saw in Phoenix that either she wasn't aware of, or had not recognized. It was important though, important enough to hide away. If this girl, Disillusion was sister to Phoenix, as a human, let us strike the bonds of being an angel, but if Disillusion was the earth-bound human-bound sister to Phoenix, then she had to be more than just a muse. There was something

greater that he couldn't figure out. That's why she intrigued him. No one had ever been born to any angel as a brother or sister, with powers. In other words, where there is an angel in the family, there are only humans. Once in a while, this rule is broken to protect the sahjinās, but that was merely because the sahjinās were younger in the existence of time, they were hybrids. Something was not right and he couldn't figure out what.

"It makes you wonder about life, doesn't it?" Dragon said to Phoenix. "Yes, things are different when you no longer seek to divide." They got off the ship and walked up to the village. This village consisted of little cottages scattered about. "How many people live here?" inquired Phoenix looking at all the little houses. "About 15 or so," Dragon replied. "What are we to do here?" "Don't ask me, you wanted to travel." Phoenix grinned at him, "I just like the water part. I love being near the water." He felt comforted by this, "Pirate." "So what do you want to do?" he asked her staring at the village. "I don't know," was her simple reply.

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## 19. All the King's Men

Tempest swayed to the soft music that entered her room. Disillusion must be in better spirits, she thought to herself. It was soft, yet had a hint of darkness to it, Theatre of Tragedy. Things had certainly changed; she still made her frequent visits to the other realm, to keep up appearance. Troubles floated in and out of both places, as would a person faced with doors. No one ever stood still, and they shouldn't. We are always moving, even when we stay still, our internal organs are moving, working. She levitated to the sound of the piano keys dancing back and forth. Meditation, something she did not so often. She wondered about her beloved in the other realm. Though it hasn't been said, everyone misses their beloved when they are elsewhere. Even Phoenix, who has tried to forget where she from. Sacrifices, that is what taunts us throughout our lives. We peer elsewhere hoping to find something better, but sometimes it was fine just where we were. A lesson hard learned. She knew though, that's why she didn't stay for long. Aricin used to keep track of her, but no longer bothers. He trusted her to move between realms, and not just the two mentioned, but others as well. Much confusion engulfed this place -- between the lonely, the rejected, the free spirits, and the landless, they had no direction. No idea. But they were free, to some extent. There were no real boundaries laid, yes there were different villages, but water and land separated them, and that was all. Rarely if ever conflict, the village co-existed peacefully harnessing different aspects in order to make life work. She knew this place well. Life on any of the realms was hard. Each had carved out a way of living, and stuck to it, forgetting all else. This is why Aricin wanted there to be disruption. This realm was a safe haven for those who were making final attempts, for something. She had taken no oaths; she simply wandered in, and was free to do as she wanted. Aricin quickly made contact with her, and soon after she became a Kingsman. Though this still meant no allegiance, it merely meant that a bond was forged.

Aricin could feel the music drowning him. It brought back memories of long ago. His conversation with Disillusion had him worried. Disillusion was right, at least on paper. She brought herself over to this side. But what sacrifices was made in order to continue to live here?

Tempest, Troubles, Phoenix, and Disillusion were all special in the sense that they break their bonds to be here. The difference is, those who cannot move between worlds, Disillusion and Phoenix, must make a sacrifice to stay. Those bonds are severed, and if they ever came to feel sorrow, they would easily take themselves back. Which feeling is stronger though? The one where they spend their life slaving away, slowly dying and feeling it. The unhappiness, but yet the sheer joy they find in having someone with them. Or the other choice, happiness with no one to share it with. Yes, Phoenix had found a companion, the one she should be with, but can't be with. The same for Dragon. But what hold Disillusion? The dynamics of choice always bewildered him. No one understood it better than Fate -- Azrael, the controller of just that. He sought his eternal half, not only to find solace in the decisions regarding Phoenix, but also to understand Disillusion. He could hear the sounds of strings -- a cello. His own, how he loved it dearly.

Disillusion closed her eyes and thought about him. Her jester, who couldn't cross over. She had never heard the song that played before, but trusted in it. Phoenix's influence, they both influenced one another a great deal. It was no surprise that Phoenix's favourite songs would spill into that of her own. Especially since she had been reading into her mind. She pondered over this though, prior to being brought here, or bringing herself, she was upset. When she called upon her powers, she felt anger. She knew anger aided her, but she also knew how to call upon happiness to aid her. Perhaps, if she could make it back to the other realm, just to see him, she could bring him back, somehow.

"I can't name a place that has a name already," Phoenix said to Dragon. "Albridge is what they call the place, you can easily rename it. To fit your English standard," he winked at her. He playfully hit him. "Why are the waters different colours in different spots?" Dragon looked at the water, "I don't know, it just is." They go off the ship and walked up a bit. Good distances away from the shore were scattered cottages. They walked a bit further inland, with their capes flowing around them, a figure in black, a figure in blue. A little girl came running towards them, waving. She was of a pale colour, white hair, and red eyes. She began speaking a different language. Phoenix turned to Dragon, for she understood nothing that was voiced by this girl. Then Phoenix heard a low voice; "You're almost too grown up." Phoenix looked down at the child who held out her hand, "I'm Gwen." Phoenix took the child's hand and bent down a bit. "What just happened?" she asked Gwen. The girl smiled coyly and placed a finger over Phoenix's mouth, and pointed to her heart. Meditate a bit, urged Dragon. Phoenix looked up at him, then looked at Gwen and closed her eyes. Her mind cleared up a bit, and she could feel the blood rushing through the child's veins, she could feel her heartbeat as if it were her own. It felt like they were in the same body. Phoenix let go of the child's hand in fear. Phoenix looked up at Dragon who kissed her the cloth, which covered her forehead. "Er-Tear and Er-Flame, we've been awaiting you," said the girl. Phoenix was still puzzled. "It all in your mind, dear," Dragon said softly to her, "We encompass the same basic means of communication." The girl grabbed hold of Dragon's right hand and led him away. He then grabbed Phoenix with his left. She could hear the girl happily chanting, "The Kingsmans, Er-Tear and Er-Flame have arrived." Phoenix looked at the figure of Dragon covered by his cape, "Flame? How did I get that?" she thought. I don't even know how I got Tear, was his response.

"My darling, I must seek out Vincze," Talen said to his wife. "Darling Ten, explain to me this. I don't understand why these things are occurring," Silen pleaded. He looked at her sadly. She was too young to understand. He got vanished leaving behind his orange rings that soon faded. From the throne he ended up in the room, next to the vanity. He looked at his reflection in the mirror. "All the King's men, knights, pawns, couldn't fix this. A price will be paid," he said to his reflection. He closed his eyes.

Aricin opened his eyes. The surroundings were different. There he sat in a cold black seat facing the person bearing the same eyes as his. He was at a small table, by a coffee shop, a newspaper laid out on the table for him. "Tempting fate, young one?" mused the person in front of him. Aricin was older in this human form as compared to Vincze. Vincze was only twenty-six and in this life cycle, he found his beloved from before, Charlotte and married her. They bore no children though, much like Talen and his own wife. One child was enough to bear. Aricin began to speak, "Azrael..." Vincze waved his hand, "Now my young one, I know you know not of our customs, even though you are a few million years old," he paused and flashed a grin, "but we speak not of our real names or ages for that matter." "Well, then Vincze," Aricin said, stressing Vincze, "you have not returned." Vincze picked up his cup and took a sip, "Would you like some coffee?" He called on the waitress and ordered a cup for Aricin. "You're housing her, trying to protect her, I know that you love her dearly, she did fight for you," Vincze said to Aricin. He paused and took another sip. It was a cold day, but not that cold as to not enjoy a hot beverage while sitting outside of the sidewalk cafe. "And you do not love her and him?" Aricin pressed. "I have watched the two been locked like this for many years prior to your creation, thank you. I would love to see them together. Except, I kind of like the world, and I want them both to be around," Vincze said in a calm manner. "You forget that I was behind much of their pain, so I would love to see them together," Vincze continued. Aricin looked away, as he remembered sitting here before. "Adam, youngest and most loved, we all wish well. We didn't know when we began, no one did. Now, it's too far along," Vincze said sadly. Pain was written all over Vincze face. Aricin took the sadness into account, into his own being, and his eyes began to brim with tears. The waitress arrived with a cup of coffee, and seemed pretty upset about having to be outside to begin with. The two sat in silence. "I want to see Uliaha," Aricin murmured while staring into Vincze's eyes. They paid for their drinks then headed elsewhere.

Gwen led Phoenix and Dragon into a small cottage for them to rest. Phoenix and Dragon walked in, heading straight for the bedroom. They never spent much time in a home to be able to deal with anything else. When they were back in Nagisa, they only used it to sleep, get ready, and perhaps eat. They threw off their capes went into the bedroom. Phoenix pulled off the spiked cuffs and arm warmers. "Chris, tell me more of your dreams." Dragon was surprised to hear her say his name. He looked over at how the moonlight fell upon her. A traveler, a loner, much like himself. He had fetched a quilt for her and already threw it on the bed. He had a tendency to be warm and she had one to be cold. She crawled into the bed and nestled under the quilt. "Why do you want to hear another story?" he asked as he tied up his long hair. "It gives me something to dream about," she replied sleepily. He crawled into the bed, sitting atop the quilt with his back against the headboard. This wasn't his own home, so he couldn't see the moon.

Disillusion pondered over how she could maneuver such a task to bring her beloved over. Tempest came in Disillusion's room and asked, "Where's that pyromaniac?" Disillusion laughed

at this reference to her sister. "Albridge," she said remembering what she lifted from her sister's mind. "So they aren't in Nagisa? Damnit," Tempest said turning away. "Where is Nagisa?" Disillusion asked. "Oh not far, just nearby really. Would you like to see it?" Disillusion agreed to this, so off the two went to see Nagisa. It was dark, so they didn't see the finer details of things, mostly the colours. Disillusion could see the crookedness of the house. Tempest walked up to the door and knocked. No answer. "You knew they weren't there," Disillusion said to her. "Can't say I didn't knock. Plus it's the nice thing to do," Tempest said with a grin. "Ah..." Disillusion moved to protest. Tempest looked at her, "Hey now, this is Phoenix we're talking about. The same Shauna you've always known. She shares this house with Chris. The same lovable Dragon," Tempest paused, "But he should never know I said that." They entered the house and Tempest led Disillusion upstairs. They saw the house the same way Phoenix first did, with a few exceptions. Dragon's violin was now rested on the square maple table. On the four chairs, there was red cotton strung about. "See, red. That denotes Shauna lives here," Tempest said confidently. They saw the two doors, Tempest pointed to the one across from the stairs, "That's a library," then pointing to the door on the right, "I'm sure that's the bedroom. There is where I tread not merely in respects to Tear." Disillusion grinned, "Yeah, but that's where Shauna sleeps too." So Disillusion went up to the door and opened it. They walked into the room, which the moon flooded with its light. There was a small refrigerator close to the door. The room was rather plain, nothing fancy. Something watched them from the darkest corner. Disillusion and Tempest couldn't see it, but Disillusion could feel its presence. There was something familiar. Tempest looked at the ceiling, "How very unlike her, yet very much like her." The two turned around to leave the house in Nagisa and head back for their own home in Ferrol.

The black shadows watched them leave. Arjun began to take his form. He walked over to the closet and opened it. There on the shelf was the teddy bear. He made sure that Disillusion got that clear picture of the bear.

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## 20. Dragging the Dreamers Down

As Disillusion and Tempest sailed away from the house on a holly ship, she received an image, Phoenix's bear, Krafty. A memoir of an event and a person. Eventually all dreams must come to an end. She was now further determined to get Alex to come. She paused for a moment though, how did she receive that message? She felt another presence, something along the boat, familiar also. "Are you sure Phoenix and Dragon are not here?" Disillusion asked Tempest. "Ah, you're the one who told me that. I asked you, remember?" Tempest replied. Disillusion shook it off. "How do you bring people here?" Tempest looked at her carefully, obviously there was someone in mind. "I don't bring people here. Troubles comes because she can, she has access. You can't give people access, they have to at least have some within," Tempest told her. Disillusion heard a cellular phone ring. Tempest pulled one out of her pocket and handed it to Disillusion and with a shrug said, "It's for you."

"Hey James, we're just making sure you're on your way. Did you reach safely?" inquired the voice. Jamie was weary; after all it was a long flight. Rubbing her eyes, she said to the voice, "Yeah, I'm at LaGuardia. We got delayed an hour, but no big deal. I'll get a cab. Who is this anyway?" The voice now muttered a bit, so Jamie quickly checked the caller identification. Shauna, it said. "Sorry, I should have said so earlier, this is --"

"I am so losing control of these illusions," Disillusion said to Tempest. "What happened now?" Tempest inquired. Increasingly Disillusion was losing control of her powers, mostly illusions going on and off. This began to worry her, for this couldn't be good for Disillusion's health. "I dreamt of the other realm again. Everything was going fine till you pulled out a cell." Tempest let out a soft laugh; "They have horrible reception, what with the lack of lines, electricity and so on." She winked at Disillusion. "Anything else?" Disillusion looked up at her, "Yeah, I saw Krafty sitting in the closet. Why would she bring that?" Tempest sighed. This was a good sign really; it meant that Phoenix had not divorced the person she was in the other realm, that she still acknowledged it to a great degree. The only thing that Phoenix ever really treasured was that teddy bear, the reminder of her link to Fahad. "Why do I feel like...?" Tempest pressed on. "It was projected by someone familiar, but I don't know who," Disillusion responded. "I want to bring Alex," she said simply. "But he can't just come, he'll need help," Tempest said.

Dragon looked to his right and there was Phoenix curled up. He pushed the locks of hair away from her face. "I guess you believe in soul mates," whispered the sleepy voice. He looked down at her and smiled, "Somewhat." She sighed deeply, "Tell me about your life then, mysterious one." he sighed and laid down with the quilt still separating the two. "There isn't much to me," he whispered softly. She opened her eyes and stared at him, then very quietly, she whispered, "Liar." Phoenix turned away smiling and he couldn't help but smile. He moved himself a little closer and wrapped his arms around her bringing her in closer. "Silly Tear," she whispered. For that he gave her a playful kick. "I was born in Long Island, New York," he started. Phoenix, being from New York, quickly asked, "Which part?" "Irrelevant," he whispered back, "my parents died, so my brother and I went to England to stay with my aunt." "You've a brother? What's his name?" "Ayami. What's your story?" Dragon asked. "Do we need to talk about it?" Phoenix asked wearily. "You sly fox. Go to sleep and then you can tell me all about your dreams," he whispered to her. "Deal."

Tacked up to a cross she could barely see anything. Ailuros had cut most of her ties with her brethren. The only one she maintained a connection with was Jibril, merely because no one aside from Pharaoh and themselves could sever that connection. She couldn't see anything through her own eyes, but Jibril had allowed her to see through his. She knew he was coming, along with the remaining survivors. Only a few angels aside from the ones that fled had survived. This was across all dimensions as well. The remaining stood with Jibril. She warned him not to come. She could feel his pain and he could feel hers. How saddening to spend another life cycle without one another. Perhaps if they were lucky, this would be the last one. Whoever remained would allow them to be together. Maybe there was something good to come of this she thought. Jibril finally reached her and she could feel the pain moving throughout his body. She hated that he felt this way. She looked into his mind to see the fallen Adam and Azrael. She saw herself strung on a cross. A cross, one that represented the four elements. This was Ailuros' plan, to destroy the four, and take back what was hers. The last standing stood together and fought valiantly till they all

fell, and that didn't take long. Jibril looked up at Lilith and his body ached. He was the last of the four; he could feel their souls encircling him, but still the last that could do anything. Death ran through his veins, that was who he was. With life dying before him, Lilith, who represented life, dying, he could feel the ancient sources within him. Ailuros had killed many over the billions, perhaps trillions or more whether out of love or hate. Now she stood before her last creation standing. With the anger of all those who fell, he alone killed Ailuros. He took her very being into his own. His azure eyes shone brightly with this accomplishment but quickly turned black when he thought of Lilith. Turning to her, she was just over nothing more than a capsule now. Carefully he took her body down and held her in his arms. She turned up at him and her eyes opened. "I'll find you again, my love. I always have and I always will," she whispered. He cried over the body he held in his arms, trying his best to feed her good memories. He picked up his head and ran his fingers through her hair. The picture began to fade. From his deep blue eyes a single tear fell on her lips and rolled off. He closed his eyes and gave her a kiss on her lips. With that he fell to her side. A few moments later, Lilith's eyes began to bat. She turned her head to see Jibril laying beside her. Lying beside him, she surveyed the land through her mind's eye. Nothing aside from a few animals and plants survived. The only thing that roamed was the grimoires -- for they had all been killed prematurely. She looked at the person beside her again. "What's a world worth without you?" She tasted his last tear on her lips and began to cry. She wept bitterly over the loss of him. His soul dwelled within her body, but she needed him beside her. She didn't want to be complete if it meant him not being with her. Tears overflowed her, and pain overtook all of her senses. She didn't know how to calm down, she wasn't him, and she didn't know what to do. She had no one at all, except her, a complete being that wept over a lost love. She read the memories that came with him, and realized it couldn't be reversed. Pain overtook her body and fire began to spring up in various places on the planet. The entire planet was taken in by fire, except for the body of Jibril.

Phoenix jumped up. "Mis, what's wrong?" Dragon moaned feeling her tremble. "Nothing," she whispered. She looked straight ahead and found a figure in white staring back at her. Tears overcame her, "Asura." The figure looked up at her and vanished. Phoenix looked down at Dragon, who had curled up beside her. The pieces all fit. She laid down beside Dragon, who was still sleeping, and stared at him. There were very small differences from how he appeared in the dream to now. Only in the mornings and late night did he look like what he used to. In his sleeping state, she drew him near and hugged him. Nothing was ever right, regardless of where you are. Sacrifices.

Arjun sat on the bed in Nagisa using his mind's eye to see Phoenix and Dragon. He saw his brother Asura as well. Sadness overcame him.

The white figure appeared in front of Aricin. "She saw me, but she knew it was me," said the figure to Aricin. "Asura, before I could understand you trying to pass yourself off as me. But now she has a bit more knowledge, more dreams, and more thoughts, more of an understanding. Why wouldn't she recognize her own children?" Aricin said calmly. "She was so sad," Asura said taking off the white cloth. He had an apricot complexion with blond hair and hazel eyes. Though in his regular form, he took after his father, just as his brother, Sephiroth took after their mother. "Arjun was watching you," Aricin commented lightly. "Arjun, my brother? Sephi, you mean?" questioned Asura. "One and the same, he often stays in Nagisa though. He follows them with the

mind's eye when they are away." "At least they are starting to wake up from their dreams," Asura said staring into the dark.

Disillusion walked into her bedroom and walked right up to the mirror. Staring into the mirror, she called upon her reasons for crossing back into the other realm, focusing on where she wanted to be. A red shimmer came from the other side of the mirror and pulled her away.

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## 21.

### Crossing the Lines that Divide

"Trust is an easy thing to gain, just as easily to destroy. Trust in no one is to be a horrid existence, trusting in everyone is too. Knowing when to draw the line is hard, even harder so when those in the past have broken it," mused Vincze. He at the small mirror he kept in his office. A paleontologist, he was often the traveling sort, a free spirit that hated to be tied down for long. He was a laid back person, but knew when to draw the line. He had recently cut off his long hair, so now he had short blond hair. Still he ran his hands through his hair forgetting that it was no longer the long length it was before. He wore a button down white long sleeve shirt, but his given nature allowed for the sleeves to be rolled up and the first two buttons unbuttoned. He was aware of almost everything that occurred in the other realm, thanks to Mikhail, Adam, Jibril, amongst other people. The only one he didn't know about was Lilith, so that information he got second hand from the others. He was aware that Lilith/Phoenix finally realized who she was. He awaited Jibril's now. He knew that Disillusion left the realm, in hopes to bring back someone, she crossed the line though. He could feel Adam's anger towards her and knew Adam would seal off entry to her. Provided Phoenix didn't find out.

The line that divided the two realms was a special one. In all other dimensions, there are no restrictions. One could come and go as they pleased. This realm in particular was a safe haven for those who were of powers. A thing, species, life forms without powers couldn't go there, merely because it was grounds for cultivation. Adam and himself created it for that purpose. Lilith had too easily destroyed things when she came into new powers. That was why it was separate. "One can only evolve when pain is endured," he recalled from a line in a speech Lilith so loved. Tempt not those who control. He was Fate, just as Adam was Time, while Lilith and Jibril were the yin and yang (though they often switched between the two). Vincze smiled to himself, for he liked to remind himself that he could not be reduced to just being paleontologist Vincze, married to his wife, with no children. The fact remained; he was who he was, a bearer of life to Ahnaleaha (the great oracle) and husband to Charlotte.

Earlier Vincze saw his daughter, how lovely she was. He accompanied Adam in a visit to their children. Uliaha, Adam's daughter was much younger than Vincze's. Ahnaleaha was merely seventeen years old, which can account for only one life cycle. Uliaha was only two, who never got the chance to live a full life, cycle. That was the age of their souls. He and his brother both bent the rules in order to have these children, to create these unique souls that are called sahjinias. They themselves crossed a line, but luckily for them, these rules could be bent after they each

assumed control over life and death. Ra had always been on their side, and always sought to make sure they could be happy, so allowed for it. Vincze leaned back in the chair he sat on next to his desk.

Disillusion arrived at a location, just not at the one she assumed she would be. Back in her bed, she stared up at the ceiling. She got up from her bed and rushed to the phone, in hopes to contact Alex. She knew she had to be quiet, especially since she would want to go back to the other realm. Her parents however heard the rustling and came up to her room. "Jamie, what are you doing at this hour of the night?" her parents questioned. She looked at them puzzled; after all she had been gone for a month or so. "I've been gone for a month, have you not noticed?" Her hair was back to its normal length, still in blue black. She glanced in the mirror and saw that her green eyes reverted back to dark brown. Her mother looked at her, "Are you feeling okay?" she asked in a concerned way. "Ah yeah, what's wrong?" Jamie asked cautiously. She couldn't make out what was going on. "You've been sick dear. You've been in bed for the last few hours," her mother reached out to touch her forehead. Jamie backed away puzzled at this whole thing. She looked around her room; everything was the same, even the books that she slammed on the floor. "What's going on?" she inquired wearily. "Go lie back down," her father said. She sat down on her bed sort of in a daze, still clutching the phone. She lay down to rest on her side she began and with her right hand began to dial Alex's phone number.

"You are compelled to make sacrifices throughout your life. You don't always know when they are most important," was the message Vincze sent to Aricin.

The sleeping figure of Dragon lay silently, unmoving. Though he questioned Phoenix who had jumped up; she had reassured him that all was well, so he fell back asleep. Someone was pulling him into the depths of sleep. Still, he could feel Phoenix's arms around him, her heart beating, but she didn't grant him access to what disturbed her greatly. He felt her tears seep into his dreams. His dreams were slightly different for tonight, for now he felt protected. Dragon's soul left his body to join that of his beloved, the person he searched for. Though his soul rested with this person, still the figure lamented over the loss of him being there. For the first time he could make out this person's appearance, for never before was he granted such access. The face was still a bit blurry, but prominent features began to become clear. Suddenly, he could see the face, and his eyes flew open. Looking back at him was the face he saw from his dream, that of Lilith, who happened to be Phoenix. "Lilith," he whispered.

Dragon looked over Phoenix carefully and she looked like she did in the dream, with minor differences. She stared back at him intensely, not knowing what to do. He gathered her into his arms and hugged her. He could feel her tears drop down, and then he whispered, "I should have known, how foolish of me." "What do we do now?" she asked. He pulled her face to that of his own, and stared into her eyes, a flash of memories came, spanning millions of years. He tried to kiss her, but he couldn't, there was something that was preventing him. She too tried to kiss him, but could not. He kissed her cheek and pulled her to his chest. Whispering he said, "I guess that's the line that divides us, being with one another, loving one another, but not being able --." Finishing his thought, she whispered, "to be physically with one another." He smiled down at her, "We are here, together. You found me." Looking up at him, she smiled, "I told you I would." And so they sat embraced with one another staring out the window.

Vincze smiled to himself at his desk. Now it was time to return. His arrival at the castle of Ferrol was brief. He was one of the few that could move in and out of dimensions without much of a problem or basic need of a passageway. He teleported to Aricin's room. "What are they doing?" Vincze asked Aricin. "Well, Seen, they both figured it out, now they are starting to realize their limitations," Aricin said to Vincze. "Calling on an old name, huh Ten?" Vincze teased Aricin. Taking a serious tone, Aricin asked, "Would you fall for them?" Vincze looked up, and he could see Lilith and Jibril in the room in Albridge who were trapped in the beings that they were. "They have longed for one another, searched for one another, fallen in and out of love, lost one another, sacrificed for one another, and yet they still manage to find one another. There will always be a distance between them. I would give my life for them to have a chance at being together without the limitations," Vincze said confidently. "Shouldn't love be like that?" Vincze added. Aricin lowered his head; he could see the same thing Vincze saw, "Yes, it should." Vincze smiled, "Their souls are in love with one another, and I don't think it falls on their modes of being. It's just something Pharaoh meant to happen."

Tempest sat in her library, researching a case of dragons. She had close ties to that race, being that her animal self was tied to that of serpents. Though given her powers and abilities, she was aligned with the higher serpents closer to that of dragons. She felt warmth envelop her heart, and looked up to the north, where Albridge was. She lowered her head, smiling, diving back into her book. Troubles had made her way back into the other realm in time to celebrate an event with her beloved. Troubles had no desire to stay in this realm. She did enjoy the visitation to vent a bit, but preferred the other realm. Disillusion had tried to combine both realms and therefore crossed the boundaries. Disillusion fell victim to her own powers as a result.

Jamie was spread out on her bed, with her the phone in her right hand. From what she gathered, she was sick, suffering from hallucinations. However, the only thing that remained true was that Shauna was missing. Vauhini and Mariel were still around for it was midterm week. She got up and went to her mirror and tried to think of horrid things, but nothing occurred. She then thought of happy things, and still nothing. She was stuck in this horrid realm where nothing went right. She had sacrificed her chance to spend life in the other realm where she was extraordinary. She sobbed that night for her mistaken judgement. Jamie curled up in her bed thinking of what occurred and fell asleep. The next morning, her eyes flew open, and she looked around at her room. "What a weird dream. Ugh, another day of class," she moaned as she got up and started to get ready. She passed her mirror and walked into the bathroom. In the mirror two faces appeared, though she wouldn't nor couldn't see them. They looked at her and quickly disappeared.

"Such a tragedy to loose a girl of such powers," Aricin murmured. "No exceptions made, not for this," Vincze replied. They had gone to check on Disillusion for one last time and her passageway was destroyed. With the two working together, they insured that Jamie and her passageways were on different planes. This is why for some people you wouldn't see their passageway, because it was on a different plane. "Did you ever figure out what she was?" Vincze asked quietly. "A biotis. They weren't blood sisters," Aricin said. Vincze laughed, "Since when did blood matter? I thought we did things by souls." "They were kind of like the chaos sisters, they functioned as sisters, but weren't. That's why they staked claims to being sisters," Aricin explained. "Understood. Kind of like you and Craven," Vincze added. "Precisely," Aricin said.

"Well, one more, huh?" "Yes, Sharlene," Aricin said as he turned away. "What are we looking for again?" Vincze called after him. "An alliance," Aricin replied.

Phoenix had gotten ready and stood in the kitchen of the cottage. She wondered of Disillusion's absence, no illusions sent. Walking over to the refrigerator, it was much larger than the small one she shared with Dragon. Opening it, she was surprised to find it stocked with various items. Moving around the kitchen, she pulled out different utensils to use. Thinking over a bit, she saw the stove out of the corner of her eye. A while later Dragon walked out of the room greeted by the smells of something freshly being cooked. He looked in the kitchen and there was Phoenix, baking. This struck him as odd, as he moved closer to her. She smiled at him. "I felt like it, I mean everything is here," she shrugged. There was a tray of cookies and a small simple cake. She turned around to pull something out of the oven, and he walked up behind her and put his arm around her waist. Shivers shot through both of their bodies. He picked up a cookie, "I didn't know you knew how to cook." He bit into the cookie and smiled at her. Phoenix laughed, "I don't cook. I bake." They remained in each other arms, understanding what new information they had of one another and themselves. Through themselves they could understand one another. Together they stood, feeling almost complete.

"The Sphinx," whispered Aricin. Vincze laughed, "I'm sure she would want no part of this."

In the other realm, Sharlene sat in her room pouring her mind into all the pages that laid before her. Midterm week. This was all too much to handle really. There was still no word back on Shauna. Meanwhile, elsewhere, Leah laid on the floor staring up at the ceiling with her paints strewn about. She awaited the answers she knew would soon come.

The phone cut off.

(Are you having a hard time following?)

Jamie sighed heavily and dialed Shauna's number. "Hey sorry about that Jamie, this is Bjorn. Though I thought you would be able to tell. Shame on you. Yeah, I'll come and pick you up, it's supposed to rain in a while. Stay there, what terminal are you at?" Jamie sighed, "Sorry Bjorn, I just woke up really and I'm tired. I'll be there. I have a cab already. Who else is there?" Bjorn responded, "Well, I just got here, because Mariel didn't tell me about it. But yeah, Mariel, Vauhini, and Sharlene." "I thought it was an all-girl thing," Jamie said in a light manner. "Look, I'm just the chauffeur," he replied in a funny way. Jamie shook her head and got in the cab. The driver put her things in the back and she told him where she was going. "I'm on my way," she said to Bjorn. She hung up the phone and watched as the rain poured down. "There's something poetic about the way the rain falls," she could hear Shauna's voice saying in a melancholic way.

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## 22.

### Where the Winds Meet

Chris lay in his bed alone. He was on his back staring at the ceiling. Tomorrow he had a recital that counted for a major part of his grade. He turned over and looked at the clock, twelve o' three.

Make that later on that day he had a recital. He looked at the dark corner of his room, his eyes could make out the violin he had. He treasured it dearly, the only gift he ever really got from his parents. They weren't violinists, merely admirers. I think dad played once, he thought to himself. He turned to his side. He needed to get some sleep. He began to search his mind for something that would put him to sleep. The image of the girl came to mind. Clicking his tongue, he thought to himself, "Well Miss. Misery, I hope to see you in my dreams." He smiled to himself. The female he dreamt about was always reoccurring. She had never failed him.

Dragon and Phoenix sat together at the table wondering about what to do next. Dragon smiled at her, he could hear her thoughts and feel her confusion. She had every reason to feel confused, after all, she had never had any dreams to hint this to her. Everything just came to her at once. Phoenix looked up at him and smiled; comforted by knowing that he could understand her. They sat in silence for a while before she began to speak. "I...I think I saw Asura," she stammered, "but I don't know, I mean, I've never seen him. I think it felt like him." Dragon rushed to her side and held her hand. "Ssh, it probably was him, looking out for you," he tried to comfort her. She fell into his dark blue eyes and whispered, "I think he made me remember." Dragon stared at her trying to read what she was thinking. He kissed her forehead and thought about what he could say. After a pause, he began, "It would make sense that he would want you to remember, especially him, especially since he is so young." Phoenix looked up at him and could tell that there was something he had not mentioned. Dragon looked down at her staring up at him, he could see the red sparks in her dark brown eyes. He sighed, "Sephiroth has been watching over us." She began to stir when he raised his hands and continued; "He didn't tell me who you were nor if you caught him would he tell you who I was. He kind of takes after you really." Phoenix grinned at the thought of her eldest child, Sephi or Arjun. A troublemaker, who would never listen to anything anyone told him unless it was out of love. He however harnessed the energies of dragons and flight, much unlike his younger brother Asura, who preferred the sea and serpents. A quality which baffled Lilith upon his creation. "Sephi watched over me?" she said softly. "Why wouldn't he?" Dragon asked. "I don't know it just seems rather touching. But what of Asura?" she asked. "He made no contact with me. He was probably watching over us at different times." Dragon responded thoughtfully. "What are we to do now?" he asked. "We are to find them," responded Phoenix. The two got themselves ready and brought the cottage back to order. Due to their disregard for most things, they didn't have to straighten out much. They headed back to the shore to catch a ship.

Gwen came running up to them as they made their way to the shore. Grinning she smiled at the pair and said in a simple voice, "I would fall for you." Upon saying those words, she ran off. This puzzled Phoenix and Dragon a great deal.

The teak ship arrived and the pair got on. "Where are we to head to?" Dragon asked. Phoenix closed her eyes, there was something telling her it didn't really matter if she were seeking out Sephi or Asura. "Where the winds take us," she said. "The winds don't control the ships my love, the waters do," Dragon responded. Embracing her, he smiled. "Then the waters know where to take us then," she said in his arms.

Asura swam deep in the waters waiting for the right boats to come along. He often knew which one his mother and father were on, telepathic connection. He was able to shut it off without them

knowing. He lay deep on the ocean floor waiting for the right signal. Then he heard it, Dragon and Phoenix were close by. He swam up and found his father's teak ship coming along. Now, it was time. There was always the right time to do something, it's just that we don't know it. It was because of Dragon's presence that the waters moved objects the way they did. He swam up to the ship and stopped the waters that moved it.

Prior to the boat stopping, he could feel something's presence. "Asura," Phoenix said softly. Walking to the stern of the ship she concentrated on one spot. Dragon moved behind her, grabbing her arms. Pulling her back a bit, he whispered, "No," to her. She looked at him and he knew what she was being pulled to. Out of the water sprang something, neither of them could really see what. It leaped into the sky then landed on the deck of the ship. The figure had a light blue-greenish complexion, its eyes were a very light blue, and the hair was a mix of blues and greens. It took a step closer and its complexion began to change. From what it was, the figure straighten itself up, the complexion turning brown, eyes dark brown, and hair became black. As it stepped closer, clothes began to appear, its hair had gotten shorter. What stood before them was a child, no older than five. Phoenix looked at the child and smirked. With her arms outstretched, "My baby," she whispered. The child ran into her arms and pulled her down to the ground. Dragon looked at his beloved Phoenix holding their child, Asura. He kneeled beside them and hugged the two. He kissed Phoenix on the neck and kissed Asura on his forehead. "Sephi," he whispered to them.

Sephi sat on one of the chairs in Nagisa. He fingered the cloth left on the tables and chairs. He was glad that Asura made himself known. Asura was younger and did deserve to be with Dragon and Phoenix, he thought to himself. "And you do not?" said a voice from behind him. Turning around, he saw Azrael. "Well, if it isn't Vincze," Sephi said in a patronizing kind of way. Vincze playfully hit him. "Shut up Gavyn. Too old to be hugged by Lil?" Vincze asked Sephi. "She'll find me now that she knows," Sephi replied. "You're such a brat," Vincze said to him, pulling up a chair. "Weren't you supposed to call on the Sphinx?" Sephi asked him. "Arjun, let's not plague me. I've got to call on her and I've got to check the last one," Vincze replied in a tired voice. "Busy, busy, for what? No one knows? You people are trying to drive us into the mad house," Sephi taunted. "It's not a mad house, it's an asylum, and we didn't create one of those here. If you need one, go back to the human side of things. As if we ever intentionally make someone mad," Vincze said shooting a grin at Sephi. Sephi laughed, "Intentionally? If I recall, you made both of my parents mad, for how many years? A few years or wait, a thousand?" "Minor error. Had I known that I controlled fate, I would have not done it," Vincze replied. Sephi looked around the room, "So is that what you did to Disillusion? Made her mad?" Vincze leaned back in his chair. He played with his hair a bit, "No, had we made her mad, then we wouldn't have had to tamper with time." Sephi looked at him, "So you set her back by time?" "Correct," said Vincze. Sephi smiled and shook his head. "Craving coffee aren't you?" Vincze asked Sephi. Sephi looked at Vincze, and smiled, "I am not Lil."

Jamie arrived at her destination, Shauna's house. It seemed full of light and energy, yet there was something missing. She paid the driver and got out of the cab. He pulled out her suitcase and she walked up the steps to the front door. Before she could ring the doorbell, Mariel opened the door. "You're late," Mariel said quietly. Jamie walked in past the den into the living room. In the dining room she could see Sharlene and Vauhini sorting through papers. "Journals, stories, and

theories,” Sharlene said exasperatedly. Jamie looked at Mariel, and Mariel shrugged, “Let’s get to work.”

Mariel/Tempest strained to hear the music. She didn’t remember the words to the song; all she knew was the part of the piano. There they were, happily dancing, looking deeply into one another’s eyes.

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## 23. A Family Apart

Below the ships, the waters that belonged to Dragon and Asura parted the way for them. They seemed to be heading towards Nagisa. Dragon, who watched at his beloved Phoenix play with their child Asura, oversaw the direction of the ship. He watched the two playing together. Phoenix's hair had grown longer, most of which was black with hints of red and orange, along the bottom a fiery shade of red. Her eyes stayed in the dark brown side, but still both Asura and him could see the red rings dancing in her eyes. Dragon looked down at himself, his hair was just as long as hers, more so black, with strands of silver and blue. Asura had taken on a reddish brown complexion, while his stayed in the bluish brown end. Then there was one of their children, Asura, in a younger form. The child had taken on a child like appearance, the only one of them to look normal in the sense that you would be used to. Dragon could hear the other child, the older one, Sephi in the distance of Nagisa. Though he could also sense the presence of the second child, Azrael, a being whom which Phoenix could not sense. Dragon looked at the two, Phoenix wearing a corset top and a flowing skirt with her black cape pulled over and Asura wearing a simple tee shirt and jeans. Though Asura looked and acted like a child, both Dragon and Phoenix knew that he was much older than he seemed. He had inherited the wisdom gained by them and his brother. It is for this reason that it is always much harder to raise two incomplete beings and put them together, then to bring them as one. This why Dragon and Phoenix could rarely, if ever, unite. Since their creation, they have only been together twice, and as one united being, they were so powerful, that a child was created. Though the other children, Adam and Azrael, could join to create one complete being, they were forged to be separate ones. Jibril and Lilith (Dragon and Phoenix) on the other hand, were created to be complete. The flaw was that they were not capable of handling such powers. Phoenix sat with Asura in her arms she could hear Sephi. She also knew from reading Sephi's thoughts that the second child, the completion of their crux, Azrael, was with him.

But I've not explained the cruxes to you, now have I? Back in the last lifetime, the last books of Aingeal (Angelicism) came to the care of the lineage of Mahesa. Years ago, prior to giving Lilith the gift of psychic abilities, Pharaoh had foreseen many possibilities of what was to come. Given his love for his creations, he sent Mikhail down to spread the word of what was to come. Not so much a prophecy as a warning. Mikhail visited someone of every language to write down the word of Pharaoh. Shortly after, the rise of monotheistic religions came. Naturally, these religions sought to destroy any trace of these books. So very few had survived, and those that did were truly in a dead language. However, within much elapsed time, the books were deciphered. Of the

thousands that were created, merely twenty something books survived. The line of Mahesa sought to protect these books, and upon finding out what they meant, they realized that they had the reincarnation of the four children within their grasp. In need of protection, they trained twenty individuals, some human, some biotis, and some angels, to protect the four. Each of which were specialized in a certain area and broken down into groups of four. The five groups were: trust, love, honour, dignity, and pride. The sixth would consist of the horsemen, which you know as the four children, Lilith, Azrael, Jibril, and Adam.

Though the line of Mahesa successfully harnessed the four, everyone else failed. For Pharaoh's warnings came to be. In his prophecies, there were a few outcomes. One of which, Ailuros sways Adam to do her biddings, and ends up destroying everything. Another consisted of Azrael's betrayal, and so on. One of the prophecies would entail Jibril and Lilith joining as one being but not being able to control the powers in time. It is irrelevant that that particular one was the most detailed. As since angels introduced "free-will" a bunch of numerous possibilities are always present. The most detailed one isn't always the right one.

The teak ship brought Dragon, Phoenix and Asura to Nagisa. They got off the ship and walked into the house, up to the living room. There they saw Sephi and Azrael sitting there, waiting. Upon seeing Azrael's face, Phoenix grinned, as did Azrael in return. He saw the shades of red glisten in the sun and when he looked at Jibril, he could see the strands of silver doing the same. How beautiful they looked together, he thought to himself. Azrael, who was sitting at the chair, got up to greet Dragon and Phoenix. As he walked up to them, he caught little Asura hiding behind the two of them. Azrael bent down to greet the young one. Azrael grinned, showing two fangs to the young boy. Asura looked at Azrael and moved from behind Phoenix and Dragon and hugged Azrael. After the hug, Azrael straightened himself up to look at Phoenix and Dragon. Dragon extended his arm to shake Azrael's hand. He then looked at Lilith and held out his hand for her to shake. Azrael desperately searched through Jibril's mind to find out what Lilith was thinking. Jibril could return nothing. Azrael stepped back slightly from Lilith, "Lil, thanks." Phoenix looked at him, "And you call me Lil now?" She smiled. With this gesture, Azrael knew that all was well between them. "Well, Phoenix and Dragon, I see you've both your children present. I must take my leave, I've things to do," Azrael said to them. "Vincze," Dragon called after Azrael, "do behave yourself." Azrael winked back at them and vanished.

Sephiroth got up from his chair and moved in closer to Dragon and Phoenix. He looked at Asura, "Shame on you, do you know how hard it is to find you?" Asura smiled up at him. Sephi looked at Phoenix, "I see he made you remember." Dragon stepped in, "So you knew it was her all this time, you sly dragon." Sephi chuckled at this, for his form, like his father's, was that of a dragon. Sephi looked at Phoenix, piercing her with his sharp green eyes. She looked right back through him and asked simply, "Now where did you get those eyes?" Sephi laughed, "The parents I was born to." "You've been watching over Asura, right?" she asked. "Of course, but the boy has tendencies of escaping my sight and chasing after you," Sephi replied. Phoenix gazed into his eyes and into his mind. This dark longed hair creature with sharp green eyes, her child, was hiding something. Dragon could feel Phoenix searching the depths of Sephi's mind. Sephi had seen Krafty, the bear, in the closet. Why was that so important, she wondered. Pink shimmers, red glitter. Sephi realized what she was doing and turned away, but couldn't stop it. "Disillusion," she hissed.

Aricin with his wife sat in silence. Azrael was wandering about, finally getting ready to finish up his tasks. Dragon and Phoenix had found one another, and their Asura and Sephi found them. However, Troubles had not returned, Disillusion was gone and Phoenix just found out. Azrael would bring word back of the Sphinx and Sharlene. He could feel Phoenix's rage now, but he wasn't sure how to explain to her that one cannot confuse free will with fate. It was always a tricky thing when love is involved. Aricin looked up, expecting her to arrive shortly. As she did. Arriving on flames, she appeared before him. "Hello Lilith," he said calmly. Getting up from his throne, he glided towards her. "I know you're upset. However, you know that within the chaos that there is, there must be structure. She tempted," he said. Phoenix looked at him, her eyes burning red. "Tear explained to you that some cannot stay, some choose not to stay. It was her choice," he said softly to her. Phoenix looked away. She knew that Adam was right, for Adam, in all his years of existence had always tried to do good. If it weren't for him, this realm wouldn't exist. "What did she do, exactly?" Aricin looked at her, the eyes on his mask turning red, "She went back to get someone who wouldn't have access. She forfeited her powers for her love. She thought she could have both." Phoenix looked at him, "Fate or free-will?" Aricin smiled at her, though only a small curve appeared on the mask, "A bit of both. She had free-will, but this place needs fate." "I doubt you sometimes Adam, but you've my trust," Phoenix said to him.

Back in Nagisa, Dragon sat with his two children, Sephi and Asura. He couldn't imagine being happier in any of his life cycles. Except for being with Lilith. He had reached his goal. Sephi looked over his father carefully. Though it was said that Sephi took most of Lilith's qualities, and Asura took most of Jibril, the fact remained that qualities were often exchanged between Lilith and Jibril. The only that that ever remained constant was that Lilith represented fire, the sun, and the Phoenix whereas Jibril represented water, the moon, and the Dragon. Everything else was gray area that could be exchanged, their feelings, their controls on life and death, and so on. So to say that Sephi took after Lilith was really not saying much at all. Sephi and Asura both took on their love of water, though Sephi had a greater appeal to fire. Sephi inherited Lilith's black wings, her fire and passion, yet a certain calmness. His father's great goal was to find Lilith, he was neither good nor bad, he had no allegiance to anyone. His dedication was finding her. Now that Jibril did what he set out to do, the next thing was to worry what was next. Sephi inherited this quality from Jibril. He had no allegiance to anyone, not even Jibril or Lilith, or even the young Asura, but they were still in his lines of loyalty. Though he had no pact with them, he would still stand by them. They were his dedication. Dragon watched Sephi out of the corner of his eyes. He knew that Sephi was just like him, with one goal, one dedication in mind. But he didn't have access to it, and he knew Lilith didn't either. Dragon wasn't sure if Adam or Azrael had access either, but he knew that Sephi loved them as well, and wouldn't hurt them.

Vincze appeared in the mirror of the room. He looked around carefully before stepping out. The Sphinx had no allegiance with anyone. And so she preferred. If there were any entity in all the worlds to represent sheer neutrality and intelligence, it was she. Due to these qualities, she formed no alliances. Her grounds were often that for any type, good or bad. They often thought of her carved out microcosm to be that of an old fashioned salon. That which people go to discuss ideas and thoughts freely without fears of being torn down. A great riddler of the sort, he was very weary of her. She didn't like to be disturbed when she was of no mood. As she should be. A relative to many a great biotis and angels, and certainly some sahjinias, though she was just

one, she seemed to encompass all. Vincze appeared in the middle of the room with his green ringlets of smoke quickly disappearing. He looked and looking back down on him were two brown eyes. He backed up a bit, to see who it was. Hanging off the side of her bed, which was high up, the girl of brown complexion and short dark brown hair whispered in a singsong voice, "You're afraid."

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## 24.

### **Sending the Sphinx's Word**

Vincze stared back at the Sphinx, known as Leah to the humans. "Of course I am. You've given me no reason to feel safe," he said grabbing the chair by her desk. "I'm no oracle, so I don't understand what you need me for," she said calmly, bringing herself down to the floor. She sat cross-legged on the floor looking up at him. "You are important," he said simply to her. "I am only as important as you make me. I am of no real use, aside from the knowledge you wish to harness," she replied. "I wish to harness more than just your knowledge, but your magic as well," Vincze replied adding a laugh. "They have awakened?" Sphinx inquired. "Awaken? I didn't know we used that terminology. They remember." The Sphinx sat thoughtfully on the floor wondering about the intentions of Vincze. He was right, he had no reason to trust her and that went both ways. He leaned back in his chair waiting for her response. "Has she any anger?" she asked. "The Phoenix is happy, Asura and Sephiroth have given her no time to dwell over things," Vincze replied. "Then she doesn't know what's to come or what could come," shrugged Sphinx as she lay on the floor. Vincze shifted uncomfortably in the chair and looked around the room, which was in green tint. He realized that the lighting in her room was green. "She's aware on some level of what she did, as does Jibril remember. They know what they are capable of, even if they refuse it. You're creating alliances to protect them. Against what? You don't even know. The greatest damage they can inflict is when they are kept together, not apart. So why you force them together is beyond my comprehension," she said dreamily. Vincze pondered over these words, he knew she was right about that, but still he felt that he should pay. "Play around with them, you'll end up getting something you didn't want. You of all people, Fate, knows that when given free will, anything is possible." Vincze looked at Sphinx; "Free will isn't as free as we would like to think. Had there been absolute freedom, and then there would be no need for me. My existence is proof that fate is necessary." "Then why am I necessary? Or why are humans necessary? Or anything for that matter? Or are we just some game that you devised?" "No, you're a reminder of why we did things." Sphinx turned over and looked at him, "But you didn't create us." Vincze disliked this view, because it was right. He replied in an offish tone, "But we chose to keep you all alive." Sphinx smiled to herself, "Was that you, or someone else? Perhaps Phoenix, or Dragon, or perhaps Talen. If it were Dragon or Phoenix, then that would raise the interesting point of why you want to control them. Tricky, isn't it?" Looking away, she could not know what was on his mind. Vincze refused to look at her when she got on her feet and said, "You want me to say something that could please Talen's restless soul. I've nothing to say nor do I want to say. If you seek the possibilities of the future, as Pharaoh once did, then I suggest you look no further than those who are closest to you in the scheme of things." Vincze looked at her and vanished. Leah smiled to herself, for that was all too easy.

Talen raised his glass as the shadowy figures danced across the room floor.

The anniversary of Silen and Talen was rapidly approaching. Normally for such an occasion, they would use the castle as grounds of celebration. This time it was no different, only that they had much more to celebrate. They began planning their anniversary celebration and they also included a celebration for Dragon and Phoenix as well as the welcoming of Uliaha to this realm. Silen and Tempest poured over the minor details that would spread over much of Ferrol. The night of their anniversary happens to fall on the celebration day of Halloween. Tempest and Silen floated side by side as they went through the castle trying to figure out what they would do exactly. For that night, they agreed that entire entrance would be grand, and a magnificent ballroom to dance in.

Chris woke up startled at the dreams he kept having. The girl she wouldn't go away. For years he had dreamt of her, but now she was becoming troublesome. He had found a girlfriend, Meredith, to whom which he loved dearly. A lover of the symphony, that's where he met her. He had brought her into his world of arts, from his violin playing to his painting. He had even showed her paintings of the dream girl, Misery. She had come to accept this bit of oddness from him, painting a girl who haunts his dreams. He often did try to paint Meredith, but it never came out as magnificent as did the paintings of Misery did. Now that he wasn't so alone, he would have no use for the presence of Misery in his mind, but he didn't know how to be rid of her.

"How do you know what's real and what's not?" Asura asked Dragon. "I guess it doesn't matter, just as long as you're happy?" was Dragon's reply. Asura held in his hand a small crystal ball, which was used for divination. A gift from Silen to Dragon, which he kept hidden away in his room. He had no toys for the child, so he figured that the ball would suffice till he could find some. In the ball, images came to the boy. He looked at each image with a newfound excitement every time. Dragon could feel Vincze's frustration as he travelled to different parts of the realms. Dragon looked at Sephi, suspicious of what the lad was up to. For some reason, he felt as if Sephi was keeping him there with Asura. Dragon walked cautiously up to Sephi, "Tell me what's going on." Sephi looked into the blue eyes of Dragon and vanished.

Phoenix appeared before Dragon and he rushed to hug her. "Never leave me in anger again," he said to her. She smiled at him. He picked up her hand and brought it to his lips. Moving her eyes aside, she could see Asura playing with a ball. "What's that?" she questioned. "An oracle's ball. We've no toys for the young man," he said to her. Looking at Asura, she said, "Let's hope that he doesn't see anything he shouldn't." Then casting her eyes aside in somewhat of a daze she quietly said to Dragon, "He needs to be elsewhere." Dragon looked at the seriousness in her face. Being elsewhere was better than being here.

Vincze appeared in front of Aricin. "She was of no use. All that circular talk," Vincze said to him. Aricin looked away, "She hinted at nothing?" "Only my betrayal." Aricin had to smile, for he knew the Sphinx well. If you were ever one to experience a conversation with her, know this, her words are masterfully played. She will never come out and say something. However, a powerful creature that she is, she manages to lay things in your subconsciousness. Vincze shook his head, "Something about controlling them." Aricin looked up and scratched his head. "Tricky

one isn't she? No alliances I assume?" Vincze looked down at Aricin, who sat on the floor, "I think her only alliance is to the Phoenix." "Then what is her word, now that we think that?" "If something happens to Phoenix, then...I don't know. I've got nothing," Vincze replied. Aricin smiled, he wasn't sure what the Sphinx's word was, but whatever it consisted of, time would tell.

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## 25.

### **The Night He Led Her**

A beautiful night it turned out to be that Halloween, the warm air rising to greet the people of the night, the moon shining bright. The villagers not only from Ferrol, but anyone who lived near were in attendance of the great party thrown at the castle. This was the night Talen and Silen, their anniversary and the arrival of their child Uliaha.

Dragon and Phoenix were in their room when the sun began to set and the moon came shining bright. They laid in one another's arms watching the day change to night. It was all they could do for one another. Tonight they would attend the party for Talen and Silen. Had they gotten what they desired, they would have chosen to stay there resting with one another. When the moon came into full view, Dragon looked down at Phoenix and nudged her a bit. Time to get ready.

Chris woke up furious again. He didn't want to disturb Meredith who was happily dreaming of something, but Misery visited him again. This character he created in his mind, he knew her weaknesses and her strengths. He knew what was necessary now. In order for life to continue on, he must.

Phoenix got up from the bed and went into the bathroom. A few minutes later she walked out wearing black and red Victorian style dress, with a corset top. Her hair was loose but had a few bouncy curls. On her neck, she had on a spiked collar and she wore black arm warmers. Tonight for the sake of being dressed up, she would wear her wings out in display. Her black feathered wings, which she normally carefully hid. Dragon's eyes fell on her and he felt his heart tightened. How lovely she looked. Her wings weren't fully spread but still, he never thought she could look any prettier than she did before. He was wrong about that. Still, he stayed still, not sure of what to say. She grinned at him, reading his thoughts. "Go on, get ready," she said softly to him. He got off the bed and grabbed her by the waist and kissed her cheek. "Ravishing," he murmured. She smiled shyly back at him and he went to go change. A few minutes later, he walked out dressed from the same time frame she was. He wore his hair loose and had on a spiked collar as well. How similar they were. Taking her hand, he led her out onto the ship, and they made their way to Ferrol.

Shauna made her way to the waters. How she loved the waters dearly. She didn't know why nor did she care to explain it. In her mind, there was Tear watching out for her. The dream guy that didn't leave her alone. She smiled at the thought of some guardian angel named Tear watching over her.

As the night progressed Phoenix and Dragon kept to their own. Isolated from one another and anyone else, they walked in the shadows hoping no one would find them. For hours the two lonely souls walked around the castle not searching for anything in particular. It wasn't till they heard the calls of Adam that brought the two wanderers back to one place. The light chamber music began which soon led way to the song that caught one another's eye. Shyly, they turned away from one another. Adam and Azrael pulled the two out of the shadows and set them to dance with one another. "But I don't know how to dance," whispered Phoenix. Dragon brought her into his arms, "It's okay, I'll lead the way, you just trust me." Holding her hands and leading the way, Dragon began the dance. The two seemed so comfortable together. Staring deeply into one another's eyes, everyone watched as the two danced. "Bloody well about time," whispered Sephiroth.

Dragon led her to the shore where he still held her close. He couldn't seem to have gotten enough of her. He kissed her wherever he could.

Chris led Misery out to the waters. He knew that she loved him and trusted him. He began to hum a song for her, one he knew she loved. "Dance with me," he whispered. "But I don't know how to dance," whispered Misery. "It's okay, I'll lead the way, you just trust me," he responded. Holding her close he danced with her. The waters began to creep up washing over their feet.

Dragon began to hum to her and led her in his arms.

Shauna listened to the sounds of Tear's voice as she walked into the water.

Chris opened his eyes and looked down at his Misery, "Do you love me?" "Yes," was her response.

Dragon looked down at Phoenix, "Do you love me?" "Yes," was her response.

Chris began to lead her into the water, "Don't be afraid, I'm right here."

Dragon began to lead her into the water, "Don't be afraid, I'm right here."

Shauna said to the sound of Tear's voice in her mind, "I won't be afraid."

The further Misery, Phoenix, and Shauna got into the water, the more frightened they got. However, there was Chris, Dragon, and Tear soothing them.

Chris and Dragon waved their hands to the Misery and Phoenix, "Trust me, I love you."

Dragon held her tightly, "I didn't mean to hurt you. I love you, I do, everything in me loves you." He held her face and brought it up to his. Finally, he was able to kiss her, and tears escaped his eyes and hers.

Chris kissed Misery, the girl who haunted him for so long. Then he let her go. He knew what her weakness and strengths were. She didn't know how to swim.

"No!" screamed a choir of voices.

Chris/Dragon/Tear brought Misery/Phoenix/Shauna down into the waters, then walked away.

Chris stood close to the shores as he watched Misery, the girl dressed in black, the girl of his dreams with long black hair and dark brown eyes drown. He smiled to himself. She was just a dream, but this would do her justice.

Dragon stood in the water crying. He wanted to help her, he didn't want to do this, but a part of him was forcing to him to. He kept trying to go back and get her, but his feet were planted to the ground. A part of him refused her.

Shauna was found in the ocean right by the shores. She apparently went in to far, and didn't know how to get back to the shore. Perhaps an undertow did her in. No one really knows where she was prior to that. She had gone missing and then turned up dead.

Daniel didn't expect to be handling Shauna/Phoenix's soul so soon. He knew he had to bring her back to life quickly. For Chris/Dragon couldn't possibly function without her. Upon the immediate receiving of the Phoenix's soul, she was sent back.

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## 26. Reversal of Tides

The night of Halloween fell on the shoulders all those in every realm. Those who could make it the castle of Silen and Talen came all dressed up. Some dressed in their normal adornments, some choosing to be different than themselves. Troubles, who had been missing for a while turned up in a fairy like costume. Tempest came dressed as a Cheshire cat, the kind from Alice in Wonderland. They all were in attendance, even little Uliaha and Ahnaleaha. The Sphinx turned up for a short while, dressed as herself. Who better for the Sphinx to come dressed up as than her own enigmatic self? The lights lit up the skies and the warm air filled the entire area. Silen and Talen came to greet their guest.

Talen, who treaded the lines of vampirism, wore an old Victorian outfit, as did Silen. The reason for the mention of vampirism is simply because they donned vampire fangs. Aricin is not really one who is deep into the world of vampires as is Vincze though. Vincze on the other hand wore a simple white button down shirt and slacks. Phoenix and Dragon entered, both dressed in the Victorian style. It was Talen's favourite time, so being that it was his night, most people dressed accordingly.

As I entered the castle, I looked around. They had created the perfect ballroom and dinner room. The floor was a magnificent mahogany wood. Along the sides the floors were carpeted dark red, I suppose to match the wood. There were tables and chair littered on the carpeted area for the guests to be seated. There were tall windows where the pale moonlight flooded the room. Above, the chandeliers hung giving off a pink tinted sort of light. But this isn't about me.

Asura and Sephi got ready for the party as well. Taking off somewhere else and leaving behind Phoenix and Dragon to get ready, Sephi took care of Asura. Sephi wore an emerald mask and wore all black. Asura on the other hand chose to dress up as a sea monster. Given his type, it was rather easy to figure out why. They were already at the castle when Phoenix and Dragon entered with the rest of the guests arm in arm. Sephi and Asura smiled at the sight of the two together, but quickly after they glanced in one another eyes, they took to the shadows. A tide of sadness washed over Aricin and Vincze as they watched Phoenix and Dragon play that game the entire night. They longed to be with one another, but couldn't.

The guests were happy and mostly drunk, whether it was off of wine, some other alcohol, blood, or even just water. They enjoyed this festive occasion, the union of Silen and Talen and the arrival of Uliaha. Uliaha was wearing a dark red cloak that covered her dark brown hair and gray eyes. This was the first time she came to this realm, and she was to stay for a year or so, with her

real creators, learning more about herself. She ran into Silen and Talen's arms. There was much confusion in the world.

Talen was glad to see his daughter, Uliaha. It was a wonderful sight to see her. Though there was sadness for other things that were rapidly occurring, he was still happy nonetheless. He was united with his daughter, who managed to bring herself over to this realm. The Sphinx eyed him carefully. Slowly she made her way to Talen. "Happiness is short-lived King Talen of Aricin, well endowed Adam," she whispered. Talen took a step back. "Sphinx, glad to see you. What are you here to warn me about," he said softly. "Nothing. I've seen what is to happen. This is not because of free will or fate. But you did screw up." "Oh, and how so?" Sphinx gave a mysterious grin, "You should give them their chance now, and they've been playing in the shadows too long." She walked away from the puzzled Talen.

Talen looked up and took a deep breath. Normally he and his wife would have the first real dance of the night and then invite people to come in and join. Tonight would be different. Phoenix and Dragon would open the floor. He shot a look of approval to Troubles. Tempest looked up to catch Talen and Troubles staring at one another. She saw Dragon and Phoenix dancing in the shadows, though she was sure no one else, well maybe aside from Asura, Sephi, Talen (Adam) and Vincze (Azrael), could see. Tempest looked at Sephi and Asura, both of which were playing around with water at the place they were seated. She spun around to find Azrael. She couldn't locate the crafty one. As she turned back to her seat, she found him sitting in the chair next to hers. She gasped and then clutching the spot where her heart rest, said "Don't you ever do that again. What's going on?" Vincze took a deep breath and leaned further back into his chair. "You know about Asura's creation right?" "Yes, they joined, too much energy, boy created, they destroy most life." Vincze smiled, "Talk about a nutshell. Did you ever wonder about Sephiroth?" Tempest leaned back in her own chair, "Well, I figured that they must have created him like they did all other angels." Vincze shook his head, "No, if he was created like the rest of the angels or the rest of the other life forms, then they wouldn't call him son." Tempest thought to herself about this. It's true, by taking in Pharaoh and Ailuros, the four children, Lilith, Azrael, Jibril, and Adam had in fact become everything's parents. "How?" she wondered aloud. "There is one way for Jibril and Lilith unite, excuse me, Phoenix and Dragon, or whatever you want to call them. You see, when they join, they suffer the consequences, they lose one another." Tempest nodded her head in agreement. Although it would seem that everyone else loses, since their lives hang in the balance, there was a point here. It was because of the loss of one another that other lives are at stake. Not because of the joining. "If we took on their consequences, then they could perhaps be together." "That's why you were seeking alliances." "Yes." Tempest looked at the two who were still running through the shadows. "You weren't seeking to contain them, but rather to free them," Tempest said. "Correct. When the question, 'Would you fall for them?' comes up, it is merely asked, 'would you suffer pain for them not to?'" Tempest looked away, we often subject ourselves to pain for someone that we love. But this wasn't that kind of pain. This was agony. "If you free them, what happens?" she asked in a scared voice. "We can't free them. They are who they are. To be free of them is to be free of life, living, and simply being. What we seek is to give them a moment," Vincze replied. "That's how Sephi came to be. How much pain did the last people suffer?" Vincze thought about this question. "Just about a thousand years of pain." Tempest shuddered at the thought, "What do you mean by pain?" "They became tormented by their own thoughts. We often think of pain as

linked to our bodies. This is not the sort, this is merely an emotional and mental punishment.” “You seem so at ease with knowing that,” Tempest replied. Vincze sat up and tugged at his shirt a bit. “I don’t seek to sacrifice others for Jib and Lil’s happiness. Rather that of my own,” he responded.

Tempest looked into the eyes of Azrael. “Tell me a story,” she said lifting her glass of orange juice to her mouth. He sighed and leaned closer to the table. “It’s short really. After I was created, we kind of had to figure things out on our own. Being made from Lilith’s essence led me to believe that she belonged to me. I didn’t know. For years I sought to make her my own. And eventually, I pried the two apart. I didn’t know how or why it happened, but then I rejected her. This angered Ailuros, who at the time still favoured us. Being that crimes were deemed ‘human like,’ I was given a human trial. Though a fairly odd one. Once again, I didn’t know. I was given a gun, blindfolded, and told that there were two bullets with three beings in front of me. Shoot whomever I wanted. I ended up shooting Jibril and Lilith.” He paused to take a deep breath. Tempest looked at him intensely. He continued, “Naturally, I was to be punished, but they realized that they couldn’t kill me, not without killing Adam, then eventually Jibril and Lilith, then Pharaoh and Ailuros. We’re talking about souls here, not bodies.” Tempest nodded in agreement. “Lilith stopped them, asking them to lessen my punishment. They did. I still didn’t know at the time. The only ones who knew were Pharaoh and Ailuros. Many years later I came to realize what they knew and what the rest of us didn’t. I was destiny, fate. I willed for Lilith to be mine, therefore I got it. The stupid shooting game? I condemned Lilith and Jibril to live lives apart from one another. That’s why I was to be punished, not because I would have shot them to killed, but because I placed that curse on them. I took it back when I realized my error, but they had lost so much time. This is my way of repaying them both,” he ended. Tempest looked at him sorrowfully, “You guys have such sad lives.” “Do you think it’s a curse or a blessing to be immortal?” he asked.

Troubles began playing a light chamber song. This stopped most people in their tracks as they watched the mood of the room change. Phoenix and Dragon also stopped to listen to what was being played. Soon they could hear the music give way to a song that was a bit darker but still so beautiful. Talen walked up to the center of the room with the pinkish lights on him. He raised his glass in the air, “To the Phoenix and the Dragon, won’t you come out to dance?” Phoenix and Dragon looked at one another and turned away shyly. Sephi and Asura grinned at the sight. Sphinx shook her head and moved closer to the walls. Vincze got out of his seat and moved to pull Dragon out of the shadows. Talen moved to do the same to Phoenix. They pulled the two out and brought them to the center of the room. They whispered to one another and then Dragon pulled her close and led the way. Vincze and Talen moved out of their way as people watched as Phoenix and Dragon danced. Raising their glasses many people along the side whispered, “I would fall for you.” Sephi looked around to see the many glasses raised to Phoenix and Dragon. He looked at Troubles who hid in corner, Sphinx against the wall, and Tempest with her head down. They didn’t know anything, but they felt something.

## **Bringing Them Down**

So, grinned the final author, “What have you learned?”

Obviously this portion is untouched by either Mariel, Vauhini, Jamie, or Sharlene. Nor did Shauna write this part. Obviously. This book isn’t “Raven’s Tear.” But being that this book was so confusing, even so to me, I figured I’d help you out a bit.

In the world today, we are led to believe many things. That doesn’t necessarily make them true. So you’ve reached the end. You’re either disgusted or annoyed, or perhaps happy, and so on. It’s all just fantasy you tell yourself. But wasn’t it a great escape? Who is to say that this didn’t happen? How would you know? Don’t always write things off because you’ve rationalized your way through it. Give things a chance. You never know. Or are you too human that you can’t make it through to the other realm? That’s probably the problem you know. So quick to write things off. I’ve left off many things, such as what became of Jamie, or where did Vauhini disappear to, or what about the elusive Mariel. Better yet, what did the Sphinx know that you didn’t? Perhaps if you could open your mind a little, you would know. Perhaps eventually I’ll tell you. I am irrelevant.

Whether it was real or not, it is up to you to decide. What a sad reminder of free will. Choosing your own reality.

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## **28.**

### **Whatever it Takes**

Phoenix’s body floated up. Talen, Vincze, Asura, and Sephi ran outside to where Dragon stood. Tempest, Troubles, Sphinx and Varick were on their heels, and the rest of guests slowly made their way out.

Vincze ran up to Dragon and pulled him out of the water, but he couldn’t, for Dragon couldn’t move. Sephi looked at his father looking at Phoenix’s body. Asura screamed as he dived into the water to retrieve the body. “She’s gone,” whispered Dragon. Sephi looked at his brother and teleported himself to Phoenix’s body. He grabbed the body and appeared in front of Dragon holding her. Asura who had seen this, quickly headed back for Dragon. Sephi looked at the body he held in his hands. “It’s her shell,” he whispered. Asura looked up at the body that Sephi held, he glared at Dragon, “After all she did for you, you killed her! Undo it!” Sephi hugged the shell that belonged to Phoenix for her soul was already reborn. “He can’t little one, she is alive elsewhere,” Sephi said to the young boy. Tears came rolling down his cheeks, “You’re going to leave us now.” Dragon looked at Asura with sorrow, “I couldn’t control that part of me. I loved her. I needed her, but not so much anymore.” “Just because your human form as found love elsewhere, doesn’t mean that you can just kill her,” Asura sneered. “My human form is powerful. It doesn’t understand her,” Dragon shot back. Talen looked away from the bickering between the

family. Broken family. He sensed Lilith's rebirth, as did Dragon. He looked at Dragon, "I know you didn't mean to." Dragon looked at the body that Sephi still held. He ran his fingers over the shell's skin and kissed her softly. Sephi had never seen this before. He handed the body of Phoenix to Dragon. Dragon hugged the shell and dropped into the water holding it. "For as long as we live, this is the way it's going to be. We'll always be chasing one another, holding on to what was left."

The Sphinx turned to leave and Talen caught her. Running behind her he grabbed her arm. "You knew," he said spinning her around. "Of course I did. But don't blame me, you, or most of the people here. Christopher Khalil has a friend that's been playing in both realms." Talen took a step back, "Chris, he was talking about his human form." "Free will and fate forgot the power of a good friend." She turned to smile at Varick.

Talen looked at Varick, Vincze upon reading Talen's mind turned to look at him also. Varick shrugged, "I wouldn't fall for them. They are too powerful together, they needed to be apart." Dragon turned to look at him, with all his anger the waters beneath turned to ice. He let go of Phoenix's body and just screamed. He brought himself into the air, and soon his body changed into that of a dragon's and he leaped on Varick and killed him. Sephi touched the body again and set it on fire. There would be no further use of this shell. Asura disappeared.

With a heavy sigh, Vincze looked up at the darkened moon. Dragon vanished. Talen walked up along side of Vincze. "It could have been worse," Talen said. "Adam, I don't want to think of just how much worse." Talen smiled, "They'll find one another, Azrael. Eventually."

Daniel harnessed the soul of Lilith and quickly put her back into the world. There was something different this time about her soul. A mark of a bird with a tear appeared.

Vauhini, Mariel, Sharlene and Jamie sat at the table. They finally finished compiling the book. "We'll send this over to Leah and see what she thinks," Mariel said. "This book needs a name," Jamie said looking at the pages bound. "She liked ravens," Mariel offered. "The book has nothing to do with ravens," Vauhini commented. "Well, it could be that she herself is Raven," Sharlene offered. "Okay, but we can't call the book 'Raven,'" said Jamie. "How about Tears?" asked Vauhini. "She didn't like Tears," pointed out Jamie. "No, Tears, Dragon of Rain. Come on. She even sort of raved about the character Tears," Mariel said. "Huh, well, doesn't Ranev mean rain or something?" Jamie asked. "Let's just call it 'The Saddest Story,'" Sharlene suggested. "It's not a romance book," Vauhini pointed out. "Then what the hell is it, because it sure seems like one," Jamie scoffed. They all stopped for a moment. "'Raven's Tear' you morons," Bjorn said walking out of the kitchen with food in his hands. The ladies looked at him. "First of all, nobody said you could eat, second of all, that's kind of nice," Mariel said to Bjorn. He smiled and shook his head, "You know if she were here, she would have gotten fed up and left for coffee by now." Mariel grabbed the sheets, "You know, it doesn't seem complete." "How so?" asked Sharlene. "A lot of things left unanswered," Mariel replied simply. "Maybe she never finished it. You know how she is," Jamie said.

Seen walked along the street and looked into Barnes and Noble. For some reason he felt compelled to go in. Walking through he browsed through the sections. He walked passed the

romance section straight into the science fiction area. As he looked over the books a book in another section caught his eye. Romance. He walked over to the book, picked it up and looked it over. There wasn't much, a dark blue book bound in black. "Raven's Tear" he read. The front had a depressed picture of a raven and a tear. "Well, Tempest finally got around to it," he said smiling to himself. He took the book with him and paid for it. He walked to the café that he was supposed to meet Shaun in. He saw Shaun seated at a chair. The air was still a bit cool, but they still sat outside anyway. Shaun looked up at him questioningly. Seen held up the book in his defense. Shaun looked at the picture and grinned. "Leave it up to Tempest and Troubles," he said taking a sip of his coffee. "Now how do we get this to Chris?" Shaun asked. Seen smiled, "I work with Meredith." "Too easy," Shaun said with a big grin, "Write something silly." Seen pulled out a pen, opened the front of the cover and began to write. He smiled at Shaun, and then said while writing, "Let time come to pass. Destiny is already written. Some things cannot be changed. Love, Seen." Shaun began laughing, "I'm sure when he finishes that story, he'll understand that."

And so it was and is. Destiny and Time sitting at a café waiting for just the right moment to spring this on Chris (Jibril). Interesting.

"Adam, where's Lilith?" Seen asked Shaun. "The young lass is in the playground Azrael," Shaun

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Book One: "The Collective Sorrow"

By Shauna Solaman



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